

Ghali urges Iraq to accept oil-sales resolution

CAIRO (AP) — U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali said Tuesday that Iraq should accept a Security Council resolution calling for a limited sale of oil to supply its population with food and medicine. He also said implementation of Resolution 986, adopted last April, would allow the United Nations to begin paying millions of dollars in compensation to foreign workers affected by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Dr. Ghali, who is on a private visit to his home country, made the remarks to reporters following a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The implementation of Resolution 986 will lead to a lifting of the oil embargo, at least partially, so that revenues can be used to buy food and medicine," he said. "From the revenues we also will be able to pay for the workers, including the Egyptian workers," he said. The resolution would allow Baghdad to export \$2 billion worth of oil over 180 days, and the sales would be allowed as long as U.N. monitors certified that Iraq was distributing supplies equitably among its 18 million people.

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King receives Barak, says Jordan-Israel peace model for others in the region

Kingdom, Israel to sign 5 accords this month

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak Tuesday paid a one-day visit to the Kingdom during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan and senior Jordanian officials on bilateral ties, progress on the Syrian and Palestinian tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace talks as well as other regional developments.

The talks with the King, the Crown Prince, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, ended with an announcement that Jordan and Israel will, before the end of the month, sign five cooperation accords that were stipulated by the peace treaty in October 1994.

The new accords will cover telecommunications, transport, maritime borders, science and technology as well as cooperation between the Red Sea cities of Aqaba and Eilat.

Addressing reporters after receiving Mr. Barak at Raghadan Palace, King Hussein described peace between Jordan and Israel as an "example for others," adding that the coming era will be a period for building peace to the benefit of the two peoples and future generations.



His Majesty King Hussein and Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak address reporters at the end of their talks at Raghadan Palace Tuesday (Petra photo)

King Hussein, who held a closed meeting with Mr. Barak before being joined by Prince Hassan, Sharif Zeid, Mr. Kabariti and other officials, said that "we are proceeding with hope and optimism towards building a good future for the two countries."

"We hope that peace be-

tween Jordan and Israel will be an example and an inspiration for others," the King told reporters at a joint press conference with Mr. Barak.

Mr. Barak, who was on his first visit to Jordan as Israel's foreign minister, was also upbeat about Jordanian-Israeli relations, saying "we are

looking forward to develop our relationship, so that it can be a symbol for what can be achieved between two peoples."

"We want to move from the phase of making peace to (the stage of) normalisation of ties" in all fields and cooperation at all levels, said Mr.

Barak.

Responding to a question, the King said that the Palestinian track is moving in the right direction and "that we are satisfied with that and will support the (peace process) to the best of our ability."

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Jordan expects no change in Saudi policies

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday that he did not expect any changes in Saudi policy as a result of Crown Prince Abdullah's taking over the running of the country at the request of King Fahd.

Wishing King Fahd a speedy and complete recovery, the King hailed as "a dear brother" Prince Abdullah to whom ailing King Fahd handed over the running of Saudi Arabia Monday.

"There are no differences between our brothers... and I am full of confidence" about the future of Jordanian-Saudi relations, King Hussein said. Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti also said that

the change in Saudi Arabia will only help improve inter-Arab relations as well as Jordanian-Saudi ties.

"Prince Abdullah has always been an advocate of improved ties" between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, said Mr. Kabariti, who added that a visit by his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al Faisal to Jordan will take place soon.

King Fahd is recovering from an apparent stroke which sent him to hospital for a week last month. A scheduled visit by the King to Saudi Arabia was postponed due to the illness of King Fahd.

King Fahd, 73, who is also prime minister, issued a royal order Monday asking the crown prince "to undertake the affairs of the state while we enjoy rest." He did not

abdicate.

Crown Prince Abdullah, about a year younger than King Fahd, accepted the task and told the King he would consult him when necessary.

The crown prince, head of the well-armed 57,000-man National Guard, has been largely running the country since the King's illness.

Crown Prince Abdullah told the king in his acceptance message that "we receive you in your natural place."

King Fahd was seen on Saudi television on Monday standing with the aid of a walking stick, smiling and talking with the crown prince and other senior officials.

Diplomats said the wording of the royal order

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Prince Abdullah expected to rebuild bridges with Arab World

By G.H. Jansen

THE NEW Year's Day hand-over of power by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia to his younger brother Crown Prince Abdullah could reduce the threat which the House of Saud that has reigned for the past 70 years has been facing over the past several years from home-grown Islamist militants striving to reimpose their strict religious and social codes.

This is because Prince Abdullah might be able to repair the damage that decades of high living and high spending have done to the monarchy among the puritan Wahhabi tribesmen of the central Najd area of the country who have formed the rulers' political

power base.

Crown Prince Abdullah, whose temporary stewardship appears certain to become permanent, is the 13th of the 43 sons of King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the founder of the kingdom who secured his throne by marrying into his country's 30 major tribal groupings.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Born in 1923, Prince Abdullah was the only son of the widow of one of Ibn Saud's bitter enemies slain in battle. Perhaps because difficulties were made for his mother at court, Prince Abdullah emerged as a loner within the inner circle of Ibn Saud's sons.

Unable to compete with

the powerful group of seven sons born to Hassa Al Sudairi (the eldest being King Fahd who succeeded to the throne in 1982), Prince Abdullah built his own constituency within the kingdom. This constituency was the National Guard, the "White Army" established to counter the possible infection of the regular army with secular, anti-monarchist ideas. Command of the 60,000-strong guard since 1963, has made Prince Abdullah one of the most powerful men in the kingdom because the majority of national guardsmen are tribal conscripts, from the very same Najdi Wahhabis who were and remain the

(Continued on page 7)

Mubarak names new premier

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday named Kamal Al Ganzoury as his new prime minister, changing the cabinet's leadership for the first time in nine years.

The announcement came shortly after Prime Minister Atef Sedki and his cabinet of ministers announced their resignations.

The action came less than one month after Egyptians chose a new parliament in national elections that were criticised as rife with vote fraud.

The move came as surprise since Mr. Mubarak said after the elections that he saw no need for major changes in the government, given the overwhelming victory by his National Democratic Party. Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) quoted Mr. Al Ganzoury as saying he would hold consultations "to form the skeleton of the new government."

Mr. Sedki, a 65-year-old lawyer, had served as prime minister for more than nine years.

Mr. Al Ganzoury, 62, who was Mr. Sedki's deputy and the planning minister, is an economist by training.

Mr. Mubarak is head of state, and the prime minister runs day-to-day government activities.

The cabinet's decision to resign was taken at a half-hour emergency session.

MENA quoted information minister Sarwat Al Sharif after the meeting as saying Mr. Sedki took the decision "to give the president the chance to choose the appropriate person for this critical stage in the process of national work in Egypt."

Deputies criticise government as they debate '96 draft budget

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Members of the Lower House of Parliament Tuesday heavily criticised the government's policies as reflected in the 1996 draft budget, describing them as "imbalanced" and warning against any potential increase in bread prices.

All of the 18 deputies who spoke on Tuesday's session, expressed their dissatisfaction over the draft budget, presented by the government to the House two weeks ago, and demanded more effective solutions to poverty and unemployment.

Islamic Action Front (IAF)

bloc deputies criticised the draft budget and the recommendations of the House's Finance Committee made on it as being in line with what they described as the "Zionist ambitions" in the Middle East and in contradiction with Islamic principles. But centrist deputies concentrated on their constituencies' demands and price hikes in the Kingdom while independent lawmakers criticised the government's policies in general.

"I hoped the Finance Committee would take into consideration the Islamic Sharia and the national will without being influenced by the International Fund policies," said

IAF Deputy Ahmad Kofahi. "Europe and the U.S. want the Jewish enemy to dominate our Arab and Islamic region in all economic and military fields."

"I wished the committee would not give the government the legitimacy to lift subsidies on bread," he continued. "This way, the House will be held responsible (for the government's) actions."

In its report, the Finance Committee proposed that the price of bread be changed and that the government compensate poor families who are eligible for subsidies. This way, the report said, poor families would be entitled to direct and financial aid while the government spend-

ing and the budget deficit would be reduced.

"The government is still maintaining the same expenditure policy as if Arab aid and support are still flowing," said Saleh Sha'watah, an independent. "The government is forcing the citizen to adopt austerity measures through collecting taxes and imposing fees while it refuses to adopt national austerity measures itself."

Deputy Sha'watah also criticised the government's policies as unfair and said there were no equality in the allocations which the draft budget makes to other cities and areas. He also ques-

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Syria, Israel resume U.S. talks today

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli and Syrian negotiators were to resume formal U.S.-mediated peace talks Wednesday after a first round last week that officials described as promising but preliminary.

Three days of talks, held under a strict media blackout at the Wye plantation outside Washington, ended Friday with news that the negotiators would remain nearby over the weekend to continue informal contacts rather than returning to their capitals as planned.

During the weekend break, the Israeli and Syrian delegates held informal discussions with U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Dennis Ross, although the substance of those talks was not known.

State Department officials said the news blackout would

remain in force this week at the 18th century eastern Maryland plantation, as officials sought to maintain a delicate diplomatic balance.

Encouraging signals meanwhile continued to emerge from the Israeli and Syrian capitals, with both sides playing down the scope of the ongoing talks but playing up the view that a unique opportunity for regional peace had arrived.

In Damascus, Syrian state radio said the new round of talks would be "decisive" because it would set an agenda for negotiations and urged Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres to thwart Jewish extremists opposed to peace with the Arabs.

The daily Tishreen offered rare words of praise for Mr. Peres on Tuesday and said

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinians advance elections campaign

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Under pressure from international monitors, Palestinian officials on Tuesday agreed to start campaigning for historic elections to a self-rule council later this month.

The step reversed an earlier decision to delay the official start of the campaign by a week until Sunday.

That plan was sharply criticised by international election monitors as setting back the chances of independent and opposition candidates and harming the "credibility" of the balloting.

"The campaign is officially open," said Mohammad Shitayeh, General Secretary of the Central Elections Commission (CEC) charge of organising the in Jan. 20 vote.

Speaking after a meeting of the commission, he said it

was decided to launch the campaign now out of deference to candidates who had already planned election events for this week and in order to "be in harmony with the comments of the international observers."

Ian Blackley, a spokesman for the European Union (EU) observers who make up the bulk of the election monitors, welcomed the CEC decision as "a positive step." He said it came in response to the EU concerns.

The decision was in effect an acknowledgement of campaigning for the 88-member Palestinian autonomy council which has been going on informally for two weeks.

Many of the 700 candidates running for seats in the council have been holding meetings, running newspaper ads

(Continued on page 7)



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Syria vows to maintain 'brotherly' ties with Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Syria has vowed to maintain its "brotherly" links with Iran despite apparent strains in relations over Damascus's efforts to make peace with Israel, the official Iranian News Agency IRNA said Monday.

Syrian Ambassador Ahmad Al Hassan met Sunday with the deputy foreign minister and delivered a message from Syria's Foreign Minister Faruq Al Shara.

The message underlined brotherly and strategic ties between the two countries and said Syria would "never allow anyone to undermine its relations with Iran," the agency said.

There have been growing signs of strain as Iran's only

close ally in the Arab world shows seriousness in settling its conflict with Israel, a state which Iran has vowed to work to destroy.

Syria's resumption of peace talks with Israel in the United States last week after a six-month break has led to growing apprehension in Iran.

"Damascus is selling its noble policies to the highest bidder," charged influential MP Jalal Sadatani on Monday.

Tehran was also angered by Syria's expression of support last week for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over its territorial dispute with the Islamic republic.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and the six Gulf

Arab states issued a statement at a meeting in Damascus on Friday backing the UAE in its dispute with Iran over the Gulf islands of Abu Mussa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb.

Vice-President Hassan Habibi on Saturday called off a visit to Syria planned for this week in protest at Damascus's stand on the islands.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, the Syria ambassador said a peace deal with Israel would "absolutely have no adverse impact" on ties with the Islamic republic.

"Iran will not oppose a just and comprehensive peace in which the rights of Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians are restored," said Mr. Hassan.

The ambassador slammed the Western media for "raising a hue and cry aimed at disturbing ties" between Iran and Syria.

"Tehran-Damascus relations are time-tested and nothing can affect them. Our ties remain as firm as ever," he told the English-language daily.

"Any misunderstanding between Iran and any Arab country should be settled through bilateral negotiations and peaceful means."

Iran, which supports the anti-Israeli Shiite Muslim resistance in south Lebanon, notably Hezbollah, has not hidden its concern over the future of such groups if Syria makes peace with Israel.

Peres admits his life is in danger

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres acknowledged that his life remains threatened by violent opponents "with their finger on the trigger," but insisted this would not prevent him from pressing ahead with his peace efforts.

"I don't have any illusions, to change things you have to take decisions which are not always popular," he said during a television interview late Monday.

"This is painful for some people, and there are lots of demented people around," said Mr. Peres, whose predecessor Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in November by a Jewish extremist opposed to the government's land-for-peace agreements with the Palestinians.

"I know that there are a lot of violent people with their fingers on the trigger and me in their sights," he said. "The situation doesn't scare me even though I know that it's impossible to have perfect security," he said.

Amnesty concerned over Shbeilat's arrest

AMMAN (J.T.) — Amnesty International in a statement issued on Dec. 29 and received yesterday, said it was seriously concerned at the arrest and continued detention of Leith Shbeilat, the head of the Engineers' Union and a leading member of the opposition in Jordan. Amnesty International is concerned that he may be detained solely on account of his non-violent opposition to government policies, the statement said.

"Leith Shbeilat was arrested on Dec. 8, 1995 and has since been detained in Jwaideh Prison. His house and office were searched. He has been mainly charged with lese majeste against King Hussein Bin Talal and distributing communiques against the King," the statement added.

"A former deputy in the Jordanian Parliament, Leith Shbeilat has been a strong critic of the peace agreement signed between Israel and Jordan in 1994. The professional associations in Jordan, including the Engineers' Union headed by Leith Shbeilat, have been campaigning

vigorously against closer relations with Israel. The particular accusations against Leith Shbeilat stem from a speech he made at Irbid in Jordan on November 7, 1995 during which he repeated his outspoken criticism of the Jordanian monarchy and government for making peace and moving to closer relations with Israel. He condemned, in very strong language, King Hussein's words of praise and expressions of friendship for Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister of Israel assassinated on Nov. 4."

The AI statement went on to say: "Leith Shbeilat's lawyers were not allowed to be present during his first interrogation, but have been allowed to be present since. However, although they have been allowed to meet him three times within the prison, they have never been allowed to meet him alone, without the presence of a guard."

From Dec. 19 to 25 Leith Shbeilat went on hunger strike in protest against his continued detention, which he described as "punishment without trial."

'Israel not responsible for intifada damages'

JERUSALEM (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Monday proposed a change to the law so Israel no longer has to compensate Palestinians hurt by security forces during the 1987-1994 uprising in the occupied territories.

"Israel cannot be held responsible for damages suffered by Palestinians during the intifada which was a type of war," Mr. Peres told a cabinet meeting.

"We too suffered material damages and loss of life and we would be within our rights to claim compensation also," he said, quoted by an official.

He suggested agreeing a one-off payment to the Palestinian authority to pay compensation to families and relieve Israel of responsibility for any more claims.

The government paid \$4 million in damages in 1995 to the families of Palestinians wounded or killed by Israeli security forces during the protests against Israeli rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But the payout covers only a fraction of the 1,000 claims filed for a total of \$200 million in damages.

More than 1,200 Palestinians were killed and thousands hurt during the six-year uprising known as the intifada.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal told the meeting Monday: "Legislation is

inevitable to protect the state against claims for damages and interests whose validity is impossible to prove" after so many years.

But the government's legal advisor, Michael Ben Yair, argued the Palestinians legal rights would be undermined by such a move, and the cabinet meeting ended without a decision.

The intifada ended after Israel signed peace agreements with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leading to self-rule for most Palestinians in the territories.

On Sunday, Mr. Peres suggested doubling the number of Palestinians allowed to enter Israel to work from 50,000 to 100,000, a governmental official said.

Mr. Peres proposed to give permits to the 50,000 Palestinians who already enter Israel illegally each day to go to their jobs. Most are from the West Bank.

The prime minister also suggested that Palestinians should be barred from entering the country only on strict security grounds.

Before 1992 more than 100,000 Palestinians workers were allowed into Israel from the Gaza Strip and West Bank each day, before the government began to impose restrictions in the wake of deadly attacks inside the Jewish state by Palestinian militants.

Vengeful mechanic grounds Israeli air force squadron

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An air force mechanic, angry over his treatment by superiors, took revenge by hiding his tools and grounding an entire squadron in charge of ensuring Israel's air defences, military officials said Tuesday.

The soldier, responsible for maintaining F-15 fighter-bombers at the Tel Nof air base near Tel Aviv, complained that he had been humiliated by officers who ordered him to do night duty after his normal day shift.

In revenge the soldier, who was not identified, hid his tools, knowing that air force regulations prevent any aircraft from taking off as long

as all mechanics tools have not been accounted for.

The rules are designed to ensure that no tools have been left inside the aircraft.

Air force officials said the F-15 squadron was prevented from flying for several hours and that an investigation into the incident had been opened. They did not say when the incident occurred.

Last month 50 soldiers serving in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, mutinied in protest at what they said was the "intolerable" attitude of their commanding officer.

They were all disciplined, including the officer.



Palestinian activist Hanan Ashrawi greets a Palestinian man in traditional headdress as she makes a campaigning swing through the Old City market area on Tuesday, while a security agent (right) surveys the crowd.

Ashrawi concerned about press freedom

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A leading Palestinian human rights activist charged Tuesday that Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief Yasser Arafat's self-rule administration has sought to limit the freedom of the Palestinian press.

"Frankly speaking, I think the freedom of the press has been targeted in many ways. There has been a certain amount of intimidation, self-censorship and reticence," Hanan Ashrawi, the former spokeswoman for Palestinian peace negotiators, told Reuters.

Ms. Ashrawi was commenting on the recent six-day detention by PLO security officials of a Palestinian newspaper editor who refused to print an item about Mr. Arafat on the front page of Al Quds newspaper, the biggest selling daily in the West Bank.

The editor, Maher Al Alami, was released on Saturday after the international press watchdog group Reporters Without Borders and the Arab Journalists Association sent protest letters to Mr. Arafat.

Asked whether she believed Mr. Arafat was committed to freedom of speech,

Ms. Ashrawi replied: "Well, I don't discuss individuals or individual intentions." But, she added: "There have been signs that there is a willingness by the (Palestinian self-rule) authority to address issues democratically while at the same time there were signs that there were violations of rights and freedoms and excesses — particularly by the security apparatus and systems."

Al Quds and other Jerusalem and Gaza-based newspapers have been closed more than once and several journalists were arrested over the past 18 months under

Palestinian rule. Ms. Ashrawi, a candidate in the Jan. 20 Palestinian elections for a national council, called for press freedoms to be safeguarded but predicted change would not be immediate.

"We expect a long incremental process of self-education, of building, of being honest with oneself and of dealing with our own shortcomings in a courageous and forthright manner," she said.

"I think we will get there as long as we have the will to do it."

Glow of autonomy fades as new reality sets in

JENIN, West Bank (AP) — The middle-aged merchant watched a group of Palestinian policemen dressed in navy blue uniforms strut past his dusty paint shop and sighed.

"Wherever you go in Jenin these days you see policemen. Why?" said Saadeddine Khalef. "They say they were bringing us democracy and freedom. The only freedom we are allowed is the freedom to cheer for the Palestinian Authority."

As Israel cedes more areas to the Palestinians, many are glumly realising that, for now, self-rule means mainly freedom of movement within their towns & far less than the national independence they crave.

Disturbing questions are also emerging about Yasser Arafat's notion of democracy. An editor was detained for refusing to put a flattering story on Mr. Arafat on the front page, preachers have been told not to criticise Mr. Arafat's government and opposition activists have been jailed for leafletting.

Over the past two months, Israel handed the Palestinian control of six West Bank towns and over 400 villages, where almost all the West Bank's 1.2 million Arab residents live.

Palestinian elections are slated for Jan. 20 and by March, Israeli troops are to withdraw from most of the last town, Hebron.

But the new West Bank map is a bewildering patchwork.

While Palestinians are in full control of the cities — about seven per cent of the West Bank's territory — they share control of several unconnected rural areas with Israel.

Israel retains full control over almost two-thirds of the area pending further withdrawals and a final settlement, to be negotiated in talks that are to begin in May.

The result is that most Palestinians still need Israeli permission to leave their towns, and Israeli troops still can stop their cars on roads between towns and risk passengers.

"We don't feel independent. The soldier who was inside the town is now on its periphery... he's ruling us from outside," said Suleiman Yousef, owner of a parking lot in Jenin.

An activist of the militant Islamic Movement Hamas in Nablus said he hasn't been able to live in-laws who live on the edge of the city two kilometres away for fear Israeli troops would still control that area would

arrest him. Palestinian officials dismiss such complaints, stressing this is only an interim period.

"People should not be worried. We're here to protect them and to make sure their lives get better," said Kadour Mousa, head of Mr. Arafat's office in Jenin.

Some, like Jenin gas station owner Mohammad Hafi, agree.

"I don't care about the shortcomings of the (Palestinian) Authority. It brought us peace and security and that's the most important thing," he said.

The deployment of Palestinian policemen, numbering about 6,000, has been relatively smooth, with little of the violence that marked the early weeks of self-rule in the Gaza Strip last year.

The economy has not changed much. Arab Israelis still cross into Jenin to shop for food, electrical appliances and furniture, the number of Palestinians with jobs in Israel — officially about 50,000 — is the same.

Mr. Arafat has also tried to assure voters he is democratic, urging crowds who greeted him Sunday in newly autonomous Qalqilya "not to vote for Yas-

ser Arafat, vote for the best."

But concerns about automatic rule have been reinforced by acts like the Dec. 26 arrest of Maher Al Alami, an editor and columnist of Al Quds daily. Al Alami, who was freed Saturday, said he was detained after a laudatory story that Mr. Arafat wanted on the front page appeared inside.

A member of Hamas movement said the ministry of religious affairs has ordered preachers to refrain from attacking the Palestinian Authority and the Israel-PLO peace agreement in their Friday sermons and to talk positive about the elections.

Some Palestinians are also appalled at the sums that have been spent on preparations for Mr. Arafat's visits to newly autonomous areas.

Palestinian sources said the Nablus municipality spent tens of thousands of dollars to deck out the town with Mr. Arafat's pictures, flags and banners and repair the stairs that Mr. Arafat used to mount a podium.

"This all came from our pockets," said Abu Imad, a parking lot owner. "We thought the Palestinian Authority will feed us. Turns out we're feeding it."

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Inspector Gadget

14:30 Ghost Writer

15:00 Bill Nye the Science Guy

15:30 Amazing Stories

16:00 The Adventures of the Black Stallion

16:30 Sky Trackers

17:00 Jinx

19:00 News in French

19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique

19:30 News Headlines

19:30 Anything for a Laugh

20:00 Div — The Nature of Things

20:25 The Bull and the Beautiful

21:10 Star Trek

22:00 News in English

22:30 Prism

The Nutcracker — A Fantasy on Ice

00:20 Comedy — Grace Under Fire

PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fajr

06:29 (Sunrise) Duha

11:36 Dhuhr

14:20 Asr

16:43 Maghrib

18:06 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweedleh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.

622785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637430

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623441

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771331

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St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

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824328

German-speaking Evangelical Co-

gregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in

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Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department

of Meteorology.

A cold mass will be affecting the

Kingdom starting tomorrow. A

tangible drop in temperatures is

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cloudy and calm. Winds will be

non-hurricane active.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 5/12

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Agaba 10/21

Deserts 4/13

Jordan Valley 10/21

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 12 Agaba 23 Humidity

readings: Amman 33 per cent.

Agaba 39 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

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Dr. Mukhlis Halasah 819220

Dr. Munther Al Omani 799599

Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070

Firas pharmacy 649945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairouh pharmacy 623672

Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ratib Attallah 984424

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

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Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 192 621111 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 63021

Hotel Complaints 603800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Overseas Calls 010230

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 661101

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Jordan Television 774112

Radio Jordan 680100

Water Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

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HOSPITALS

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Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Princess Basma receives delegation of Arab women pre-school educators

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Highness Princess Basma Tuesday received a delegation representing Arab women pre-school educators in Kufri Yasif in the office area.

The Princess praised their role in the improvement of the educational conditions of women and children. Princess Basma also reviewed services provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for women and children, noting in particular the experiences of the Jordanian women committees in the various governorates.

The Princess said the experiences of women's committees provided the

basis for the establishment of the recently-declared Jordanian National Forum for Women.

Princess Basma reviewed achievements of the National Jordanian Committee for Women's Affairs, and said the committee is guided by the national strategy for women, which embodies women's ambitions and priorities.

Chairperson of the Arab Women Pre-school Teachers' society, Hanan Khouri, reviewed the objectives of the society, saying it aims to improve the performance of Arab women educators in carrying out community-based educational and cultural activities.



Farhan re-elected Islamic Action Front secretary general for next two years

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ishaq Farhan, the secretary general of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, was Monday re-elected by the Shura council for another two years.

Mr. Farhan, was the only candidate for the post, re-elected by acclamation, an IAF member told the Jordan Times.

Also elected on Monday were 16 members to the executive council.

"There was no lobbying before the election," said Nael Zeidan, who was elected himself to the new executive council.

Dr. Zeidan described Dr. Farhan and the new 16-member councilmen as "rational and practical."

Although all IAF members reject the peace treaty

with Israel and normalisation of relations with the Jewish state, analysts note, the IAF has two groups: the hawks, who according to an IAF member, have no respect for "red lines" and have "unreasonable demands," and the doves who are practical and objective, and who act more like mediators.

The hawks, according to the source, who did not wish to be identified, demand the withdrawal of the 16 IAF deputies from the parliament in an expression of opposition to the peace treaty and normalisation with Israel.

They also demand that the government lift its hand off any political activity by the opposition, such as rallies and gatherings, the source said.

He described the winning of the doves as reflecting the stability of the party.

During Monday elections, 93 out of the 120 IAF Shura council members attended.

Thirteen members, according to Dr. Zeidan, were performing Umra, the small pilgrimage, and 10 were absent without excuse.

Dr. Zeidan dismissed the idea that the absence of the ten members from an "important meeting" was a form of objection or rejection of the already expected results.

Mr. Farhan has served as secretary general of the IAF since 1992.

The new council will plan to expand its grassroots members through opening new branches in different areas of the Kingdom, as well as campaigning against corruption, poverty and unemployment, an IAF source told the Jordan Times.

Audit Bureau reports on '94 expenditures

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Audit Bureau's 1994 report discovered 111 cases of fraud in public and private offices and registered 2,750 violations of laws, regulations and circulars in its presentation Tuesday of its report to the Lower House of Parliament.

The Audit Bureau acts as a watchdog over public and government office expenditures.

Its report was referred by the House to its financial committee to sum up financial activities in 1994.

The report, which was submitted by its chief, Abed Kharabsheh also noted that more than 39 per cent of the total number of violations

were related to financial regulations.

According to the report, capital expenditures during 1994 amounted to JD 358.2 million, accounting for 24.2 per cent of total expenditures.

The report said the figure registered JD 40 million less than the amount estimated at the beginning of 1994.

This, the report noted, reflects delays by public and government offices in implementing development projects.

The report also pointed out that during 1994 the Audit Bureau was able to save JD 7,238,997 through controlling government

offices' financial management. According to the report, 74 per cent of the savings were made through the bureau's control and supervision of four departments: the Income Tax Department, the Greater Amman Municipality, the Ministry of Finance and the department of customs.

The report noted that despite violations, the Jordanian economy during 1994 achieved a rate of growth exceeding the estimates of the economic reform programme in most sectors. It added that gross domestic product estimates have continued their upward trend.

The report said the gov-

ernment has pursued efforts to stabilise prices, reduce the rates of unemployment, stabilise the rate of exchange in the Jordanian dinar and that it has adopted measures to ensure self-reliance and to increase exports.

The report called on the government to support the Royal Jordanian (RJ) airline and help restructure its operations. It also called on the Civil Service Consumer Corporation and the Industrial Development Bank to take appropriate measures to ensure better and more effective handling of public funds.

The report also pointed out that the performance of

the Ministry of Education was estimated at 76.4 per cent of its expected overall operational performance, that of the Ministry of Public Works at 67.5 per cent, the Jordan Valley Authority at 39.6 per cent and the Water Authority at 81 per cent.

The report pointed out that a significant amount of allocations for government projects had not been utilised.

Once the financial committee has studied the report, it will prepare recommendations to be submitted to the House and the government.

Singapore visitors meet with House speaker

AMMAN (Petra) — The visiting head of the Arab and Islamic Cultural Centre in Singapore, Taher Ben Mohammad Ben Issa Haddad and the mufti of Singapore, Abdul Maksud Faris met with speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament to discuss cultural and Islamic research affairs.

The two visitors briefed the Speaker of the Lower House Sa'ed Hayel Srour on the centre's activities and objectives.

They also discussed future cooperation issues between similar centres in Arab and Islamic countries.

Mr. Srour said he appreciated the centre's efforts and called for continued support from Arab and Islamic countries to help the centre pursue its objectives.

Mr. Haddad was later received by the Speaker of the Senate Ahmad Lawzi and discussed Islamic culture in south east Asia in general and Singapore in particular.

The Singapore delegation also Tuesday visited the University of Jordan and met with the dean of the Sharia Faculty, Dr. Mahmoud Sartawi, who outlined the faculty's evolution and its role to serve Jordanian and Islamic communities abroad.

Mr. Sartawi outlined the faculty's future plans and programmes for the promotion of Islamic culture abroad.

Bay'at Al Imam defendants accept appointment of defence attorneys

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of 13 people accused of sabotage Tuesday accepted the decision of the State Security Court to appoint seven attorneys to represent them in court after their trial was postponed indefinitely in October because of their refusal to appoint attorneys to defend them, a judicial source told the Jordan Times.

Vice President of the Jordan Bar Association (JBA) Ziad Khasawneh told reporters shortly after meeting with the State Security Court tribunal that the defendants accepted to have the seven attorneys defend them in the case.

"We discussed the matter with the court and the defendants, and in the end the defendants agreed to cooperate with us," Mr. Khasawneh, one of the seven appointed attorneys, said.

Some of the group members, known as Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance), had repeatedly rejected the appointment attorneys to defend them in the past two months, charging that the attorneys were atheists and that

they did not believe in the court's justice system.

The group, who were dismissed twice from the court room for interrupting the session, said they would defend themselves or God would decide their fate.

According to sources, the group followers believe only themselves to be the 'true followers' of the Islamic faith and do not attend mosque prayers or schools because they reject the system.

According to Mr. Khasawneh the remaining six attorneys appointed by the (JBA) include Na'eem Madani, Faisal Batayneh, Ahmad Al Sheikh, Salem Hiyasat, Adnan Rashdan, Mazin Irsheidat and Samir Kharfan.

They are charged with slander against King Hussein and illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials. If convicted, some of the 13 group members might face the death penalty.

The court set Jan. 24 as a new date to hear the case and to allow the seven newly appointed lawyers time to review and study the case.

Security Court today hears CID attack case

Meanwhile, the State Security Court today will start hearing the case of six people accused of attacking the office of the Central Intelligence Department (CID) at Baqa'a refugee camp in December of 1994.

Five of the defendants allegedly went to Baqa'a camp on Dec. 26, 1994 and showered the CID building with bullets from a machine gun injuring one person then fled the scene. The sixth defendant was apprehended by the authorities three days before the incident occurred.

According to the state prosecutor general's charge sheet, the defendants are charged with the assault and the intent to block the appropriate authorities (CID) from exercising its duties in accordance with the Constitution and the distribution of pamphlets slandering the King.

The charge sheet said that the suspects started their illegal activities in April of 1994 and plotted to carry extremist attacks on tourist and security departments in the Kingdom.

NAF allocates JD 15.8m for the needy

AMMAN (J.T.) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) which cares for the needy in Jordan has allocated JD 15.8 million this year for the assistance of the needy.

Allocations made last year were JD 1 million less than this year's.

NAF Director General Faraj Hashem was quoted as saying by Al Dustour daily Tuesday that the increase of the allocations for 1996 aims to offer assistance to a greater number of

needy people in the country, either in recurrent monthly financial assistance or through the financing of businesses taken up by the heads of needy families.

According to Mr. Hashem, the NAF will direct its attention to encouraging able-bodied needy persons to take vocational training courses before obtaining long term soft loans from the NAF to start small businesses.

He said the NAF will give more attention to such income-generating schemes to gradually move away from offering monthly payments.

The NAF will, however, continue to offer monthly aid to the needy but will monitor their conditions and will stop the aid once the family members have started earning a living, according to Mr. Hashem.

He estimated that this year's JD 1.8 million will

finance vocational training and small businesses, and the rest will be given in the form of direct financial aid to the poor.

According to Mr. Hashem, the NAF allocated and distributed JD 400,000 to poor and handicapped children during 1995, which was double the sum spent on them in 1994.

Nadim Sawalha to bring history to the Amman stage

AMMAN (J.T.) — The time is 1170 AD. The place: Shayzar Castle, Syria.

The theme is a historical account of the eleventh century figure, Ousama Ibn Munqith, warrior, poet, diplomat.

It is one of those rare opportunities when expatriate artists bring their art to the Arab World.

A good thing, too, for both artists and audience: a chance for refreshing outlooks and self-evaluation.

The artist is no unknown. Nadim Sawalha, brother of one half of the infamous pair who make up the Nabil and Hisham duo, Nabil Sawalha, brings his theatre all the way from London.

The play, entitled, *Ousama—A Muslim Nobleman's View of the Crusades*, is based on the memoirs of this literary and historical figure, and according to the play's programme, is a description of an "unstable, brutal, and exciting" world of battles and behaviour.

Ousama's descriptions, the programme continues to say, of "bizarre Frankish behaviour reflect ironically enough those contemporary situations in which nations still confront one another with incomprehension across what appears to be an impassable divide."

Sounds promising. A his-



Nadim and Corin in rehearsal of the play *Ousama*

torical play that reflects a political parallel to today's world, displaying, again, according to the programme, "amusement" rather than "acrimony," in its depiction of the invading Franks.

Nadim Sawalha who plays the role of Ousama, studied drama in the U.K. and has worked as an actor, radio producer and scriptwriter for the BBC Overseas Service.

He has acted at the Royal Court and Royal National

Theatres in London. He recently played Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot*, transposing the setting all the way to the Egyptian desert. Nadim Sawalha is also father to two well-known actresses, Julia and Nadia Sawalha.

Ousama is directed by Corin Redgrave, actor, producer, director and brother of the well-known sisters Lynn and Vanessa.

He recently appeared in the film, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Ousama is written by Sara Salih, whose father, Tayib Salih is a well-known writer. She is an academic who combines her career with writing fiction.

What else to expect of this rich combination of writers, directors and actors, remains to be seen. Onstage. At the Nabil and Hisham Theatre, Rainbow Street, Jan 6 and 7.

The play is, of course, in English.



A FAVOURED VIEW: A tourist rests on the stone edge of Jabal Al Qala'a to take in the sight of one of Amman's favourite viewing points (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Pakistan offers reward for capture of MQM militant

KARACHI (AFP) — Authorities are offering five million rupees (\$142,857) as a reward for information leading to the capture of a powerful militant of the ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), officials said.

Officials are seeking the arrest of Naeem Sharri, believed to be an MQM militant, who has more than 60 counts of terrorism registered against him, including the massacre of 15 people in one house last year.

The reward offer comes hours after Mr. Sharri was

identified by witnesses as the man who masterminded Monday's attacks which left 17 dead around the troubled city. Four MQM militants were killed by police in a gunbattle Tuesday.

Gunmen kidnapped a number of people late Sunday, but released all civilians. An army captain, a paramilitary officer of the same rank and two policemen, who were kidnapped in the same area, were found tortured and dead Monday morning.

Officials said a civilian who was released by the

kidnappers identified a photograph of Mr. Sharri as one of the assailants. Another man also identified by the same witness was killed in a gunbattle with police Monday evening.

Police said Mr. Sharri is believed to be in his mid-20s and warned that he is armed and dangerous, adding that he has escaped security dragnets several times. Officials said he is the MQM's top militant leader.

More than 500 MQM militants have been arrested or killed in the past six

months, officials said.

The MQM represents Urdu-speaking migrants from India after partition of the subcontinent in 1947, and has been at loggerheads with the government for more than 18 months.

The government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto holds the MQM responsible for much of the violence that left nearly 1,800 dead last year. The MQM denies the charges and says its supporters are being victimised by the state.



Relatives of injured gather in an emergency room in a hospital after the exchange of fire in western Karachi (AFP photo)

Arms-drop suspect informed authorities, says daily

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A key suspect involved in the air-dropping of crates of weapons from a Russian-made plane in eastern India had allegedly informed British authorities about the deal at the last minute, a daily said Tuesday.

Peter Bleach, allegedly informed the police special branch through a British-based firm about the arms-drop when he realised the deal was "of a fishy nature and meant for illegal activities," the Times of India newspaper said.

The daily quoted officials from the Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI), the Indian government's premier detective agency, as saying that Mr. Bleach, a Briton, got the go-ahead from the special branch which said "necessary action would be taken at the right time."

Mr. Bleach told CBI officials that he wanted to "cheat the party without causing any financial loss to myself," the Times report from the eastern city of Calcutta said, adding that the move was probably an 11th-hour attempt for immunity.

CBI officials said the British special branch alerted Indian authorities about the arms-drop, mentioning two possible sites in the eastern state of Bihar.

Mr. Bleach and five Latvians have been held for air-dropping 300 assault rifles, 81 anti-tank grenades, and 20,000 rounds of ammunition estimated to be worth \$10 million on Dec. 17 in West Bengal state, of which Calcutta is capital.

The six are charged with sedition, which carries the death sentence. The owner of the AN-26 plane, a New Zealander, however managed to escape after two Indian MiG fighters forced the crew to land in Bombay on Dec. 22 while en route to the Pakistani city of Karachi.

The Times said Mr. Bleach had demanded an additional \$75,000 after "sensing the illegal nature of the deal," to the \$50,000 paid in advance after the deal was finalised in Copenhagen in September with a certain Peter Haestup.

The newspaper gave no details about Mr. Haestup but said Mr. Bleach, a for-

mer defence services officer, had earlier allegedly helped the British newspaper News of the World with an expose on how the Irish Republican Army acquired AK-47 rifles.

The CBI claims to have seized photographs from the AN-26 crew identifying the drop zone as a white bungalow belonging to a secretive Hindu sect called Ananda Marg (happy path) in the West Bengal district of Purulia.

The group had denied involvement but an unidentified senior home ministry official in New Delhi told the daily that the group was still under suspicion. "They were not the end-users but we believe they were the first recipients," he said.

Indian authorities, who have not been able to identify the recipient of the arms, say the weapons were mainly bought from Bulgaria and that the transporter mainly flew to Phuket in Thailand, and then "criss-crossed" Indian airspace.

Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan has accused India's arch-rival Pakistan of organising the baffling air-drop.

Mexican buses crash head on, killing at least 25

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Two tour buses crashed head on in a desert road in northwestern Mexico near the U.S. border, killing at least 25 people including several children, authorities reported.

"We have an unconfirmed 25 killed," said Sonora state Red Cross official Aaron Flores.

"The buses are in pretty bad shape, making the retrieval of bodies very difficult. Until we remove the last body we cannot confirm fatality figures," he added.

Other Red Cross officials told AFP that the dead included six children.

Some 27 people were injured in Monday's pre-dawn, head-on collision on a stretch of desert road some 20 kilometres south of the border with the U.S. state of Arizona, the Mexican news agency Notimex said.

While authorities refused to speculate on the causes of the accident, the U.S. Cable News Network said some passengers were blaming a bus driver who dozed off at the wheel and swerved into the oncoming lane.

CNN said police at the scene found no skidmarks on the highway.

A manager of the Parque Elite tour bus company in Sonora said that its bus left Mexico City bound for Tijuana on Dec. 30 and that the driver, Francisco Velazquez, had died in the crash.

The other bus, from the Transporte del Pacifico company, was travelling from Tijuana to the central city of Guadalajara.

Notimex reported that three of the four drivers aboard the two buses were killed in the crash, but this could not be confirmed.

Survivors were taken to four hospitals in Sonora, in the towns of San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonito, Caborca and Puerto Penasco. Two were taken for treatment in Tucson, Arizona, said Sergeant Michael O'Connor of the Pima County sheriff's department in Arizona.

One severely injured passenger died as he was being rushed to Puerto Penasco, Red Cross officials said.

Seven injured children taken to a local hospital in Sonito "were in stable condition and waiting for their relatives," the officials said.

Mr. O'Connor said the bus crash was the second collision Monday on the same stretch of highway. A Chevrolet Astra crashed nearby, killing a woman and injuring her husband and four children, he said.

The five family members were taken for treatment in Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. O'Connor added.

Homeless die of cold on the streets of Tokyo

TOKYO (AFP) — Death stalks the homeless huddling in Tokyo's cold pavements this winter as their numbers continue to rise in the world's second richest nation.

In December alone, six people died in Shinjuku, one of Tokyo's richest districts and home to nightclubs where thousands spend fortunes.

Three others were found dead in the busy Ueno district and six in the impoverished Sanya area, all succumbing to a cold wave that has hit Japan, a police spokesman said.

But the total number of deaths in the metropolis is still unknown. The police gather only some of the victims, sharing the task of taking away dead bodies with various municipal services.

"We think that as during last year, there will be more than 40 people dying this winter in this district," a police official in Sanya said.

The death of a homeless person is a non-event in Japan, judging by the coverage in the press and television. Moreover, no overall statistics are available for the whole of Japan or even for Tokyo.

And this despite the fact that more and more homeless can be seen in Japanese cities. There are said to be

between 3,000 and 5,000 in Tokyo alone, seeking shelter in parks, subways and under raised expressways that criss-cross the city.

"Some have really nothing at all: at the most a blanket or two."

They even sleep on bare earth," says Damien-Pierre Lesot, a Frenchman who works with charitable organisations that undertake twice-weekly distribution of rice balls.

"I am shocked at the indifference towards them in such a rich country. At times, they attract plain contempt," Mr. Lesot adds.

Some 430 are to be found in Shinjuku district. Around Ueno station, 270 people have settled in a park. Another group of 300 to 400 live on the streets of Sanya, from where building firms recruit seasonal daily-wage workers.

Among the homeless are some who had led the normal lives of office workers but, due to a divorce or loss of a job, have fallen off the social ladder.

"They have been seen arriving in a business suit, wandering aimlessly around the streets for a few days before choosing a pavement site to settle down at," Mr. Lesot says.

As in the rest of the Japanese society, there is a clear pecking order even

among the homeless. There are those who have nothing at all, others who live in a tent and yet others who boast a cardboard house with a radio and sometimes even a television, cutlery and pieces of furniture.

Thesefortunates go to the extent of taking off their shoes at the door, as is the custom in Japan. They keep brooms and elaborately clean their makeshift homes.

The Tokyo administration which is seeking to build a vast moving walkway in the subway at Shinjuku where 200 homeless have been living for several years, tried this winter to move them to a prefabricated temporary shelter in the bay area.

They were seen offering meals, medical care and baths, as well as making job proposals. But the homeless would not bite. Several scuffles followed and the authorities had to beat a retreat for a while. However, work is set to resume on Jan. 15.

Kazuaki Kasai, an activist who speaks for the homeless, says: "The way the metropolitan government has proceeded with the plan clearly indicates that what it wants to do is not to solve homeless people's problems but to get rid of them from the Shinjuku area."

Indonesia quake evacuees spend night in tents

PALU, Indonesia (R) — Nearly 400 wooden houses and government buildings were damaged by a powerful earthquake that rocked Indonesia's Sulawesi island, but there were no reports of casualties, officials said Tuesday.

More than 24 hours after the quake, details were still sketchy. Officials said people evacuated from homes were spending a second night in tents at high altitude.

The number of evacuees was not clear but one official said it was "many". An estimated one million people normally live in the area shaken by the quake.

Central Sulawesi governor Abdul Aziz Lamadidjo said information trickling in from the affected areas indicated there were no casualties from the quake, which

measured 7.0 on the open-ended Richter scale and triggered low tidal waves.

"The report I have says that 384 houses were damaged while some government buildings were cracked," he told Reuters in Palu, capital of central Sulawesi, some 1,560 km northeast of Jakarta.

Mr. Lamadidjo said villagers evacuated to safer places Monday feared further tidal waves near their homes.

"They (villagers) are likely to spend another night in tents because experiences say tidal waves usually recur," he said. "We hope nothing will happen overnight."

An official with the Jakarta-based National Earthquake Centre said Tuesday two major aftershocks had jolted the areas

since the first tremor. "Most people were outside their homes when the earthquake struck," the chief of the central Sulawesi police, Colonel Hidayat Sumiarso, said.

He said the people of Sulawesi were generally well prepared for earthquakes. Most houses were built on stilts to take the impact of minor tremors.

The quake struck the large orchid-shaped island of Sulawesi, between Borneo and the Moluccas, spicing islands, as Indonesians celebrated New Year's day. Indonesia's most famous volcanic eruption was in 1883 when Krakatau, between Java and Sumatra, exploded, triggering a wave that killed more than 36,000 people.

China ends 1995 with a surge of executions

BEIJING (AFP) — A surge in the number of executions at the end of 1995 could have seen China set a new capital punishment record for recent years, observers said Tuesday.

Local newspapers arriving in Beijing indicated there were at least 44 new executions in late December taking the figure for the final weeks of the year to around 150.

At least 1,791 people were executed in 1994, up from 1,419 in 1993, according to Amnesty Inter-

national, who says the figures are probably incomplete because Chinese courts are secretive about the number of people sentenced to death.

Observers said the number of executions in 1995 are likely to have been higher than in 1994, as China toughens up its clampdown on criminality.

On Dec. 29, Haikou Intermediate Court in the southern island of Hainan sentenced 22 robbers and murderers to death. Three of the sentences were sus-

pended, the Hainan daily said.

It was not known if the death sentences had been carried out but often the execution with a bullet in the neck is finished soon after the trial.

In Changsha, capital of the southern province of Hunan, the Intermediate Court ordered the execution of 12 people for various crimes on Dec. 28, the Hunan daily said. It added that the same court gave terms of more than five years to 109 other people.

China said to have one million drug addicts

BEIJING (R) — The number of drug addicts in China is rising rapidly and is estimated by experts to have reached one million, more than double the number of addicts who are registered, a researcher has said. "The number of drug addicts has risen by 100,000 a year since 1993," Sun Baochen, of the Economics Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said by telephone. "In 1993 there were 170,000 registered drug addicts, in 1994 270,000 and in 1995 380,000," he said. "Experts estimate the real figure at one million," Mr. Sun said. "Before, the most popular drug was opium. Now an increasing amount of heroin is consumed," he said. One gramme of heroin sold for 300-500 yuan (\$38-63.5) in Beijing, Mr. Sun added. Drug trafficking had spread from southwest China, which borders the golden triangle opium growing region, to the north. In recent cases, drugs had been smuggled through China to the former Soviet Union and Japan, Mr. Sun said. Local governments in China's Yunnan and Guangxi provinces have sent experts to the golden triangle countries, Laos, Burma and Vietnam, to plant cash crops on drug-growing land and help end the cultivation, the Guangming Daily said. Farmers in one area could earn 2,300 yuan (\$277) per 0.16 acre from growing tea and 2,000 yuan (\$241) per 0.16 acre from growing tobacco, compared with 1,200 yuan (\$145) from growing opium, the newspaper said. From 1991 to September 1995, China dealt with 425,000 drug cases, arrested 189,000 criminals, seized 15.8 tonnes of heroin, 10.6 tonnes of opium, 3.4 tonnes of marijuana and 2.3 tonnes of amphetamines, official figures show. In a two-month campaign in mid-1995, 101 criminals were executed for drug trafficking. The death penalty is given to anyone caught with more than 1,000 grammes of opium or 50 grammes of heroin, official reports say.

Warning on soda machines

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Warning: That soda vending machine you just fed with money could kill you. That is the gist of a new label now appearing on the estimated 1.7 million soda vending machines in the United States — all thanks to a campaign waged by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Though hardly comparable to, say, traffic accidents, the CPSC notes that 37 people have been killed and 113 injured in soda machine mishaps since 1978. In 1995, two people were smashed to death by the heavy machines, the agency said. Often, people are injured by the soda dispensing bulks — some of them in the one-litre range — while trying to tip them over in order to steal money or get a free drink. "Sometimes a simple warning can be the difference between taking action or not taking action," said CPSC spokeswoman Kate Premo. She added that all machines should carry the labels after the U.S. manufacturers of the devices agreed to the programme several weeks ago. The vending machine industry has decided to comply with the voluntary programme, but Larry Ellis of the National Automatic Merchandising Association said warning labels are not the answer. "If a person's going to tip it over, no warning label is going to stop them," Mr. Ellis said.

China steps up anti-Patten campaign — report

HONG KONG (AFP) — China is to step up pressure for Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten to be moved when British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind visits Beijing next week, a newspaper report said Tuesday.

The newspaper quoted unidentified sources in Beijing as saying that China wanted Mr. Patten's continued presence in Hong Kong to be discussed during Mr. Rifkind's visit, which starts Jan. 9.

The Chinese government has regularly attacked Mr. Patten since he introduced political reforms to increase democracy. But the British government has always defended the former chairman of the ruling Conservative Party and Mr. Patten insists he will stay until Hong Kong is handed

back to China on July 1, 1997.

The sources said China wanted Mr. Patten out of Hong Kong before the end of 1996.

Beijing was reportedly angered again by recent remarks, attributed to Mr. Patten, who is currently on holiday in the Philippines, that the economy in Hong Kong could worsen, causing greater damage to China than Britain.

Chinese leaders reportedly fear that Mr. Patten might sabotage plans for a series of confidence-building measures in the lead-up to 1997.

The Standard said Beijing has set aside \$20 billion to be pumped into Hong Kong should the economy go sour.

Beijing has already said it sees no role for the gover-

nor in the handover in 18 months.

The British Foreign Office rejected suggestions the issue would be raised during Mr. Rifkind's visit as "nonsense" and said Beijing had made no such request, the Standard reported.

There were similar reports last year after Mr. Patten went ahead with his democratic reforms after two years of wrangling with Beijing. Lu Ping, director of the Hong Kong and Macau affairs office of the Chinese state council, told Xinhua news agency Monday that Britain had indicated that it wanted to cooperate over the handover of Hong Kong was "a good sign. We welcome this move."

But he added, "we hope that this commitment will not be restricted to words, but put into practice."

More than 40 per cent of youth want out before China takes over

HONG KONG (AFP) — Forty-three per cent of Hong Kong youth say they would like to emigrate before this British colony is returned to China on July 1, 1997, according to a survey reported Tuesday.

In the telephone survey of 1,660 people aged between 15 and 24, by the Chinese University's Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, the 43 per cent who would move away or wanted to leave but were unable to said they were worried about loss of freedom and human rights, difficulty

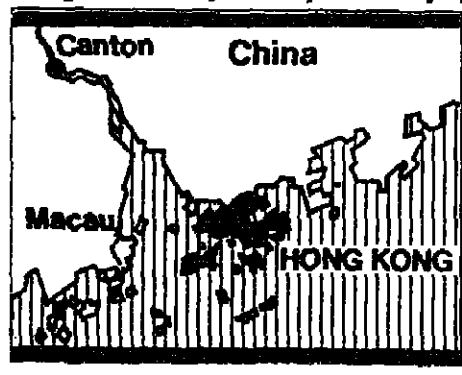
of those questioned said they expected the future to be brighter, the survey, reported in a local newspaper, showed.

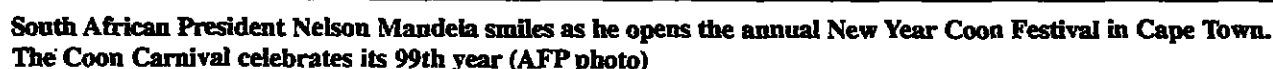
At a news conference, poll organiser Timothy Wong blamed the news media's negative reports on China for what he said was a lack of understanding by the youth of Hong Kong's future.

"They have learned from the media the many problems in China — in its economy and political system and human rights," he was quoted as saying.

"Inevitably they will ask themselves whether that will occur in Hong Kong after 1997. They will be more worried," he said.

Almost half of the respondents say the territory's prospects rest in the hands of the Chinese and British governments instead of their own.





SEOUL (AFP) — Jailed former South Korean President Chun Doo-Hwan ate a hearty meal Tuesday after ending a hunger strike but his recovery will speed up the filing of corruption charges, prosecutors said.

Mr. Chun started to eat solid food for the first time since he began fasting on Dec. 3 to protest his innocence on charges of masterminding a mutiny related to a 1979 military coup.

Mr. Chun ate boiled mushrooms, shredded beef cooked in soy sauce and rice porridge, doctors at the Police Hospital said. They added that he was also being fed intravenously.

Mr. Chun ended his protest after he lost consciousness last Friday, the 27th day of the hunger strike.

His recovery has prompted prosecutors to step up their investigation and resume questioning in hospital.

Prosecutors said corruption charges would be added to Mr. Chun's list in the middle of January over a slush fund built up while in office from 1980 to 1983.

Saturday, investigators said they had traced \$133 million in an account opened at the Korea Investment Trust Co.

The account was opened in October 1983 in the name of the Presidential Security Service and closed down when the scandal over a slush fund raised by his successor Roh Tae-Woo erupted.

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The account was opened in October 1983 in the name of the Presidential Security Service and closed down when the scandal over a slush fund raised by his predecessor Roh Tae-Woo erupted.

ed in October last year.

The prosecution will also indict about 12 of 80 people involved in the coup and the 1980 massacre of some 200 pro-democracy protestors in Kwangju, state radio KBS said.

Mr. Roh, who succeeded Mr. Chun as president in 1988 and was Mr. Chun's coup colleague, is also in jail, charged with raising some \$650 million in covert financing and assisting Mr. Chun in the 1979 coup.

Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh are expected to be sentenced around May, news reports said. Mr. Chun could face a death sentence as the mastermind of a military mutiny and Mr. Roh a life sentence.

The jailing of the two general-turned-presidents was a

startling about-face for President Kim Young-Sam, who ended decades in opposition in 1990 and formed a political alliance with the two military-backed leaders.

Mr. Kim's aides said the reversal had not been planned. They added that revelations about Mr. Roh's slush fund persuaded the president to sever ties with his immediate predecessors.

The ruling camp tried to ruin Kim Young-Sam's archival and opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung by linking him to Mr. Roh's slush fund, but its bid got nowhere, as Mr. Roh keeps silent over his financial backing for politicians.

BELFAST (R) — Britain said Tuesday that Northern Ireland's fragile peace process was being eroded by a spate of vigilante-style murders blamed on Irish Republican Army (IRA) gunmen.

After a man was fatally wounded Sunday night in Northern Ireland in what appeared to be the fifth such incident in a guerrilla campaign against drugs, the British government cast doubt on the democratic credentials of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, which wants direct peace talks with London.

"Only parties who are committed to peaceful and democratic methods can expect to sit down and negotiate about the future of Northern Ireland," the Northern Ireland secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, told BBC Television.

Mr. Mayhew, who has British cabinet rank, said Sinn Féin was "inextricably linked" to the IRA guerrillas, adding there was no justification for the five killings in recent weeks.

"It is not compatible with a commitment to peaceful, democratic methods...And only parties who are committed to peaceful and democratic methods can expect to sit down and negotiate about the future of Northern Ireland," Mr. Mayhew said.

"Everyone must be very concerned that this extremely important development — progress in getting democratic parties sitting round a table — is put at risk by these quite unjustifiable killings," he added.

The latest victim, a 31-year-old man, was hit by a shotgun blast Monday night as he sat in his car with his girlfriend in Lurgan, 20 km southwest of Belfast. The woman was not injured.

Security sources said the incident followed a pattern of recent attacks that the

believe were the work of the IRA, some of them under a cover-name "direct action against drugs".

They say the gunmen use the killings to keep a "law and order" grip on their own communities, in areas where many Irish Roman Catholics reject the British province's predominantly Protestant police force.

The killings are not regarded as a breach of the ceasefire declared by the IRA and its Protestant extremist rivals in September last year.

Sinn Fein says the authorities have failed to produce a shred of evidence to link the killings with the IRA. It does not condone the attacks, which it says underline an urgent need for all-party agreement on political structures.

Britain has refused to give Sinn Fein a seat in full-scale political talks until the IRA disarms to prove it has no intention of resuming its

war against British rule in the province.

Low-level talks have started, however, and an international arms body is studying ways of doing away with guerilla arms that might be acceptable to all sides.

Sinn Fein Chairman Mitchel McLaughlin told BBC Radio he did not condone the killings.

"The position is however...There is a policing vacuum that can only properly be addressed when all of the political parties are sitting around the table to solve these problems."

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists main Protestant Party, said on BBC Radio: "The peace process is collapsing under the decision of Sinn Fein/IRA to resume violence, witness by the atrocious murder...last night."

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Scandinavian aid money sent to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa was stolen by South African secret police and used to discredit the intended recipients, according to a former agent.

In an interview with the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet Tuesday, Michael Leach described how the South African secret police lured Scandinavian aid organiza-

tions in the 1980s by buying telephones and opening letters, in a bid to maintain the apartheid regime.

"If an organisation in Scandinavia sent \$1,000 to a union, we (opened the letter) and took care of the check. We always made sure to send a thank-you note, so it looked like the money had reached the addressee," said Mr. Leach, who is now a member of the ruling African National Congress (ANC).

"Then we would put the money in the union head's or treasurer's private bank account and spread a rumour that he was corrupt and stealing the union's money. Such rumours lead to internal investigations," Mr. Leach said.

"If the secret police needed a new photocopier, we would write to an organisation in Scandinavia and pretend to be an anti-apartheid organisation. When they received the copy, they

would claim to have sent a thank-you note but say that it got lost in the mail," he said.

"It was a way of discrediting the recipients and making Scandinavia believe that they were corrupt and unreliable," he said.

The money stolen from Scandinavia was from smaller, less-experienced aid donors. Mr. Leach said

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military authorities freed four political detainees on New Year's day, newspapers said Tuesday.

The former leader of the Oil Union Nupeng Wariebe Agamene, who led oil workers on a long and crippling strike in the summer of 1994 to press for the release and installation of presidential claimant Moshood Abiola as head of state, was among those freed Monday.

Also freed were Mr. Abiola's publicity aide Fred Eno, oil unionist Ade Lomo and Sylvester Akhaine-Odion, secretary-general of the Campaign for Democracy (CD), the papers said.

A senior government official in the capital Abuja confirmed to Reuters the men had been released but declined to comment further.

The military government, which insists that there are no political prisoners in Nigeria, does not normally announce the arrest or detention of anyone.

An official of CD said Mr. Akhaine-Odion telephoned the Lagos-based organisation Monday from Kebbi state in the northwest where he was held and said he had been freed.

"He said he would be back in Lagos later today," Olusola Odutalaye told Reuters. He said he had no immediate information about the other three.

Saturday the authorities freed another senior aide of Mr. Abiola, Ademola Adeniji-Adele, who had been held without trial for 17 months in the northern city of Kaduna.

Two other associates of Mr. Abiola, the undeclared winner of the annulled 1993 presidential election, were freed

earlier in December following the intense pressure on the government to release political detainees after nine minority rights activists were hanged in November.

Mr. Abiola himself has been detained since June 1994 when he defied the military rulers and proclaimed himself president.

There is talk in Nigeria that he too would be released soon but his confidants have dismissed this as mere rumour.

Nigeria has been in crisis since the annulment of the election which would have ended a decade of military rule.

The crisis was worsened by execution of the activists who included author Ken Saro-Wiwa after a controversial trial found them guilty of the murder of four pro-government chiefs.

About a dozen other political prisoners are still in detention without trial, some since August 1994 when the government crushed a series of pro-Abiola riots and strikes.

In addition, 43 people including former army ruler and retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, journalists and pro-democracy activists were imprisoned last year over an alleged plot to topple the government in a coup d'etat.

Human rights campaigners said the government needed to release all detainees including the alleged coup plotters in order to end the crisis in Nigeria and restore civil rule.

"Those so far freed are like a drop of water in a sea of iniquities," said radical Lagos Lawyer Gani Fawehinmi.

MS. "DON JUAN" became on Nov. 21, 1995, the latest car carrier to join Wallenius Lines' fleet. She was delivered by the Daewoo Okpo Shipyard in South Korea. MS. "DON JUAN" will fly the Swedish flag and sail on trans-ocean routes.

The new ship, a pure truck and car carrier (PCTC), is a sister ship to MS. "TITUS" and MS. "TURANDOT" that were built at the same shipyard in November 1994 and January 1995 respectively. She is the third in a series of six new car carriers ordered from the same Korean yard. The fourth ship will be delivered during the second half of

1997 and the fifth and the sixth during 1998.

The 22,800 dwt MS. 'DON JUAN' has a capacity of 5,850 cars or a combination of 3,000 cars and 475 high and heavy vehicles. This new generation of Wallenius Lines' vessel incorporates a garage for cars on the weatherdeck, a fixed ramp system and 'scissor lifters' for raising and lowering the hoistable car decks. These features add to the ship's versatility and increase the efficiency of loading and discharging of vehicles.

MS. DON JUAN's maiden voyage took her first to Japan and then to Europe via Singapore and the Suez

Canal. Her first port of call in Europe was Dublin on Dec. 27, followed by Bristol on Dec. 28, Rotterdam Dec. 30, Bremerhaven Dec. 31 and Aqaba on January 31, 1996.

Mr. Christer Olsson, president, Wallenius Lines, said: "MS. 'DON JUAN' will be a welcome addition to our fleet as traffic volumes are increasing due to the growth in existing contracts, the winning of new contracts and the addition of new destinations".

With the delivery of MS. 'DON JUAN' Wallenius Lines will have a fleet of 28 specialised car and truck

carriers. Wallenius Lines transports: nearly one million vehicles a year and the company is the biggest vehicle shipping line outside Japan and the largest in Europe. In 1994, Wallenius Lines became the world's first shipping company to be awarded the Lloyd's register Quality Assurance combined quality certification with ISO 9002 and the ISM Code.

T. Gargour & Fils have been appointed since September 1989 as general agents in Jordan for Wallenius Lines - Stockholm.

Wallenius Lines is Europe's largest car carrier

and the fourth largest in the world. Wallenius Lines has started to serve Aqaba Port as of November 1989, however, but as a result of the Gulf War and the U.N. interception at Tiran Straits, the service was suspended from August 1990 until the end of October 1993 when Wallenius Lines started again operating indirect services from Jeddah to Aqaba by using feederline services.

During 1994, Wallenius Lines resumed its direct services and came on top of all other RO-RO liners serving Aqaba Port. Wallenius Lines total

number of discharged units during 1994 was 2,128, thus constituting around 63.47 per cent of the total number of discharged units at Aqaba from the north continent in that year. Also, during January - November 1995, Wallenius Lines vessels discharged 2,398 units at Aqaba out of 6,091 units, thus accounting for 39.37 per cent of the total number of discharged units at Aqaba from the North continent during the said period.

Wallenius Lines is operating a bi-monthly regular service to Aqaba from the north continent and the Mediterranean.

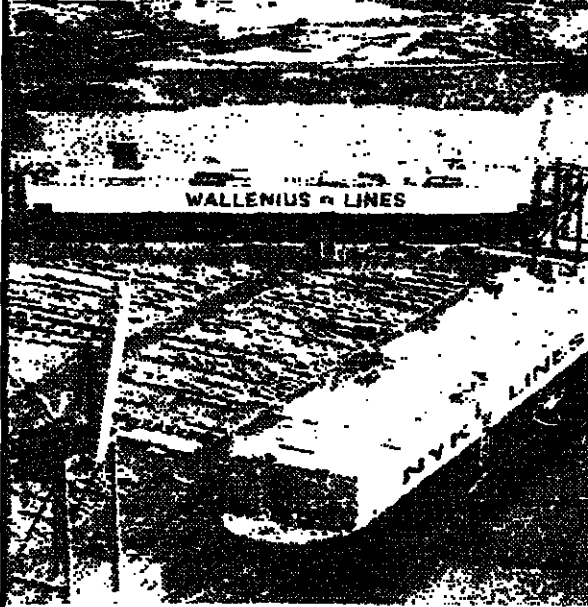
	Date		30/12/95				
<i>Ports of Loading</i>	<i>Turandot 010</i>	<i>Don Juan 002</i>	<i>Shohjin 015</i>	<i>Otello 034</i>	<i>Junsei Maru</i>	<i>TBN</i>	<i>TBN</i>
Hanko	18/12/95	08/01/96	-	05/02/96	-	-	-
Fredericia	15/12/95	05/01/96	-	03/02/96	-	-	-
Wallhamn	20/12/95	03/01/96	-	08/02/96	-	-	-
Drammen	14/12/95	11/01/96	-	01/02/96	-	-	-
Gothenburg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bremerhaven	23/12/95	15/01/96	27/01/96	12/02/96	25/02/96	10/03/96	25/03/96
Hamburg	22/12/95	13/01/96*	28/01/96*	10/02/96*	26/02/96*	11/03/96*	26/3/96*
Amsterdam	27-12-95	16/01/96	30/01/96	13/02/96	28/02/96	13/03/96	28/03/96
Antwerp	28-12-95	17/01/96	31/01/96	14/02/96	29/02/96	14/03/96	29/03/96
Southampton	29-12-95	18/01/96	02/02/96	16/02/96	01/03/96	15/03/96	30/03/96
Le Havre	-	-	03/02/96*	-	02/03/96*	-	31/3/96*
Barcelona	02/01/96	23/01/96	07/02/96	21/02/96	06/03/96	23/03/96	05/04/96
Vetri	04/01/96	25/01/96	09/02/96	23/02/96	08/03/96	22/03/96	07/04/96
Piraeus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ports of Discharge							
<i>Aqaba</i>	<i>09/01/96</i>	<i>31/01/96</i>	<i>14/02/96</i>	<i>29/02/96</i>	<i>13/03/96</i>	<i>27/03/96</i>	<i>12/04/96</i>
Jeddah	11/01/96	02/02/96	16/02/96	02/03/96	15/03/96	29/03/96	14/04/96
Hodeidah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mina Qaboos	16/01/96	07/02/96	21/02/96	07/03/96	20/03/96	03/04/96	19/04/96
Dubai	17/01/96	08/02/96	22/02/96	08/03/96	21/03/96	04/04/96	20/04/96
Abu Dhabi	18/01/96	09/02/96	23/02/96	09/03/96	22/03/96	05/04/96	21/04/96
Mesaieed	-	10/02/96	-	10/03/96*	-	06/04/96	-
Bahrain	19/01/96	-	24/02/96	-	23/03/96	-	22/04/96
Dammam	20/01/96	11/02/96	25/02/96	11/03/96	24/03/96	07/04/96	23/04/96
Kuwait	21/01/96	12/02/96	26/02/96	12/03/96	25/03/96	08/04/96	24/04/96
Port Kelang	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore	30/01/96	21/02/96	04/03/96	21/03/96	03/04/96	17/04/96	03/05/96
Laem Chabang	02/02/96	21/2/96*	08/03/96	24/03/96*	07/04/96*	20/4/96*	6/5/96*
Hong Kong	06/02/96	27/02/96	12/03/96	28/03/96	13/04/96	24/04/96	11/05/96
Kuching	08/02/96	29/02/96	14/03/96	30/03/96	15/04/96	26/04/96	13/05/96

Dates shown as indications and subject to change without notice.

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JOINT SERVICE, EUROPE TO THE MIDDLE EAST



**من موانئ البحر الأبيض المتوسط
شركة تكتسار للتوكلات البحرية
وكلاء خطوط ١٦٨**

**جبل صان - الدوار الثالث
مجمع الرياصي - الطابق الرابع - عمان
ص.ب ١٦٩ عمان ١١١١٨ الأردن
تاكس ٢٢٠٣٢ / ٢٢١٧٢ قرط جو
٢٩.٦٦٦ هاتف
٢٩.٥١٧ فاكس**

**من موانئ شمال وغرب أوروبا
شركة توطين فرفور والاءه
WALLENIUS LINES وكلاء خطوط**

**شارع وصلي التل (الجاروش)
مجمع النصار - الطابق الرابع - عمان
ص.ب ١٦٩ عمان ١١١١٨ الأردن
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٢٩.٥١٧ فاكس**

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 6843111, 699634

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Space for the chairman?

THE STRANGEST among the strange news of 1995 may have well been an item last week about the detention of a Palestinian editor for not carrying on the front page of his newspaper a story comparing Yasser Arafat to the Muslim Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab who liberated Jerusalem in the 7th century. There may have been a problem with the fact that a Christian cleric had to make the comparison in the first place. But the fundamental issue there was whether Mr. Arafat or anybody else in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) had the right to detain an editor over an editorial judgement he made.

"If you are talking about freedom of the press (in the emerging Palestinian entity), you are assuming there is a press here," an independent Palestinian journalist told an Israeli Television interviewer right after the news of the detention came out. "The fact is: We do not really have a press yet."

In the nation-building process, which Mr. Arafat has embarked upon following the Oslo accord, he cannot hope to succeed unless and until he is able to build national institutions first. States are never what their leaders want them to be; otherwise many countries would be perfect or near perfect. Unfortunately, though, this is not the case in today's world, nor was it ever; and this is simply because the institutions upon which states are built take time to rise and mature, and then the process is complicated always by the need for the collective energy and vision of citizens in order to be completed, which is incidentally never easy to find.

In the Palestinian case, in particular, it will be neither economic viability nor nationalistic feelings alone that can create a state. The determining factor for the emergence and success of such a state, we believe, will be whether the people, guided by an enlightened leadership, can build the necessary infrastructure, on top of which come democratic institutions and public freedoms.

Since the media are not only among the most important of these institutions but also play a central role in the building of others, we would have thought Mr. Arafat would do everything in his power to establish, develop and give it all the backing it needs. This certainly cannot be done by detaining editors who do not use the chairman's stories on the front page. Nor is it done by ignoring or sidestepping the law, which does not and cannot possibly allocate newspaper space where stories are used.

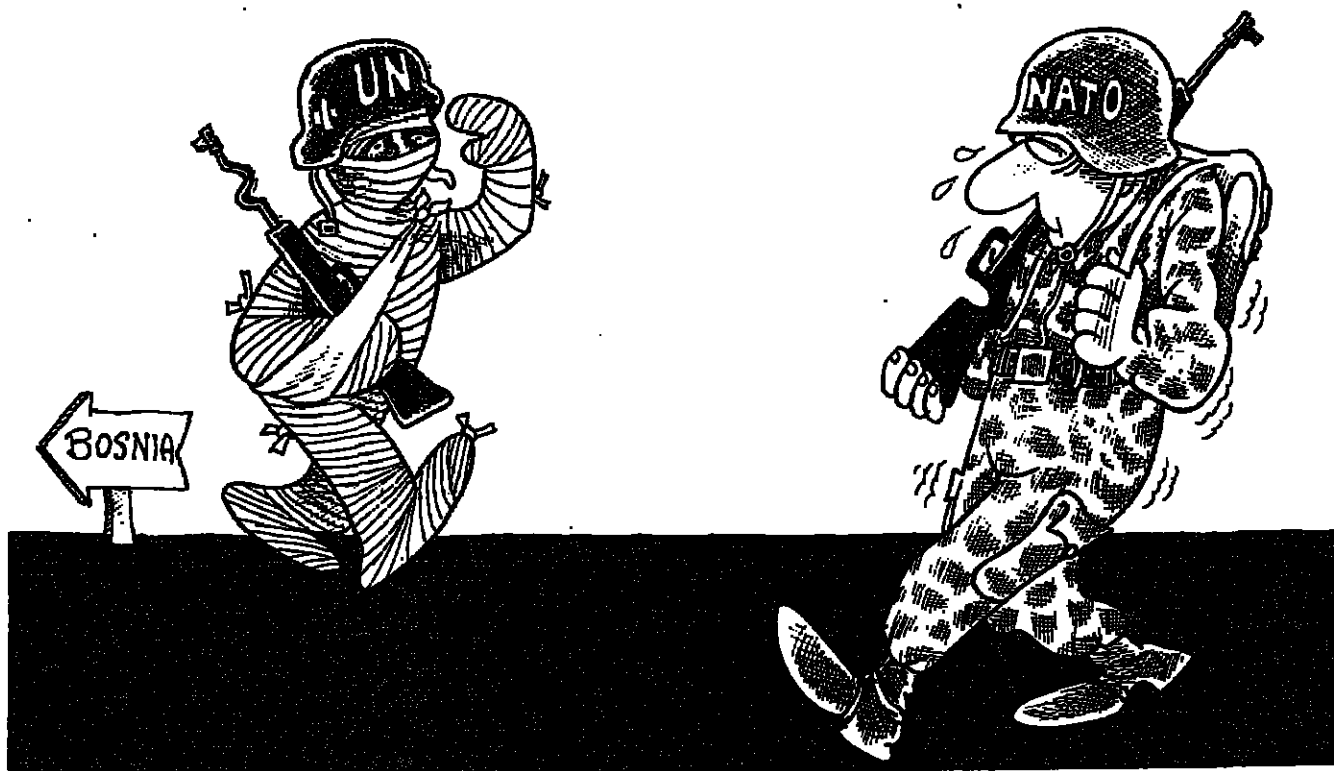
We just hope that what happened to Maher Alami, the Al Quds editor, the other day is a one-time incident. For, if it is part of a trend, the PNA will not be able to help the Palestinians.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WHETHER WE like it or not Syria and Israel are approaching a peace treaty that might come within weeks before the Israeli parliamentary elections, according to Fahed Al Fanek. The columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that in principle Jordan welcomes this development. Because it means the accomplishment of a comprehensive peace in the region. It seems that the United States and Israel have both given their consent to Syria's status as a guarantor of security for Israel by enjoying certain privileges in Lebanon and have approved of Syrian presence in Lebanese territory to achieve that goal as long as Israel's security is a priority for Israel, noted the writer. He said that Jordan can understand and accept this situation if the Lebanese people approve of it but should Syria demand to have a greater role in this region like guaranteeing Israel's security on all fronts and Damascus's pledge to secure an Israeli peace with all the Arab states, then a real problem would emerge. Repeating that Jordan welcomes a comprehensive peace with Israel, the writer said that such peace should offer guarantees from Israel never to launch aggression on or interfere in the internal affairs of the Arab countries and a commitment to achieve a just peace with the Palestinian people.

IT IS natural for the Palestinians who have seen their towns liberated this month to fix their attention on the coming parliamentary elections, said Saleh Qallab, a writer in Al Dustour. The world community has mobilised a great number of observers to monitor the Jan. 20 elections, and the Arab masses are watching to see whether the results would be fair and free or regrettably similar to the outcome of elections held in the Third World and some other Arab states, noted the writer. Fair and free elections would not only help contribute to the national unity but would also pave the ground for the establishment of a truly independent and free state in Palestine, said the writer. Of course the elections, he said, will not be the end of the road because the Palestinians still have a long way to go in the coming negotiations over the final settlement.

M. KAHIL



The Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

1996 begins with the race to November

WHEN 1995 began it appeared that the newly-elected Republican majority in Congress would completely eclipse President Bill Clinton as the dominant force in Washington. Not only were the Republicans exhilarated by their sweeping victory in November of 1994, but they were unified behind an aggressive leadership with a focused agenda.

During their first 100 days the Republican "revolution" lived up to expectations, passing many of the provisions promised in the "Contract with America." Republicans appeared so dominant at that stage that one point President Clinton felt compelled to protest to the press that he was still "relevant."

At year's end, the tables have turned somewhat, and there is greater balance between the president and the Congress. A number of factors have combined to produce this change.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the leading figure of the Republican Congress, has never been a popular figure, and with greater visibility he has become even more unpopular. His brash style has frightened many voters. While Mr. Gingrich has led Congress, it is increasingly clear that he can not lead the American people. In fact, polls now show that most Americans feel that the Republican revolution has gone too far and is too extreme.

This perception has been helped by a newfound unity among Democrats. After a few months of sparring, the Democrats in Congress and the president have found common ground on a number of issues. They have

also projected a unified message warning of the danger that will face the poor, the middle class and the elderly if the Republican agenda passes.

Another factor that has contributed to the Democratic success in late 1995 has been the rising popularity of President Clinton and his string of successful foreign policy initiatives, which enhanced his leadership image in the eyes of many voters. Even in the foreign policy debates, the Republicans have appeared divided and therefore politically weak.

The Democrats have been so much more successful than the Republicans at getting their message across that all national polling data now indicate that the Democrats have a strong lead over the Republicans as the country heads into 1996. Not only is President Clinton favoured at this point to win over his Republican challengers, but when asked to rate Democrats against Republicans, Democrats now lead by over 10 per cent. This is a huge margin, and is especially notable in light of the Democrats' convincing defeat just one year ago.

To some extent, the Republicans have been victims of their own success. They moved too quickly with proposals too far-reaching in the eyes of many voters. But once the Republican congressional majority assumed that Mr. Clinton was vulnerable, too many competing Republican candidates emerged to challenge the president's bid for reelection. The results have not helped the GOP's chances in 1996.

But even with the polls as they were in December

1995, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the voting in November of 1996, when the presidency, the entire Congress (435 seats) and one-third of the U.S. Senate (34 seats) will all be up for election.

Mr. Clinton's standing now appears to be stronger than it has been for over two years. His popularity is up and he is clearly favoured over all potential Republican challengers. But a great deal can still happen in the coming year to challenge the status quo or break it up entirely.

And while the Democrats have improved their national standing, it will be relatively difficult for them to use their new popularity to turn back the Republican control of the Senate and the House. In part due to the new negative atmosphere among Democrats following the Republican takeover, eight incumbent Democratic senators and 21 incumbent Democratic members of Congress have already announced that they will not be running for reelection (compared to only four Republican senators

and Republicans, feel that the 1996 elections are the most important facing the U.S. since the end of World War II. Not only is the direction of U.S. world leadership at stake, but two very distinct and competing visions of governance will be put before U.S. voters. Republicans will be asking voters to complete their "revolution" of dramatically downgrading government, ending the growth of government-supported social programmes, and decentralising decision-making by giving more power to local and state governments.

Democrats will warn that carrying through of the Republican agenda will only deepen the divisions between the rich and poor, and whites and blacks to create a social upheaval. More positively, the Democrats will argue that the federal government still has an important role in providing not only for national defence but also for the social well-being of all citizens.

While there will be the normal amount of negative campaigning and 30-second television advertising that has disfigured U.S. politics over the past few decades, there will also be a substantive and critical debate about the nation's direction. Less than one year before the election it is impossible to predict the outcome with any certainty. But it is clear that Democrats are better-positioned to make their case than they were at the beginning of 1995.

It will be an exciting and critical contest between two parties more evenly matched than at any time in recent history.

"Less than one year before the (U.S. presidential) election it is impossible to predict the outcome with any certainty. But it is clear that Democrats are better-positioned to make their case than they were at the beginning of 1995."

If the White House makes any serious errors in handling either the Whitewater scandal or any other issues it will face, or if any of the president's foreign policy initiatives fail, he may experience a negative downturn in popularity. At the same time, once the Republicans decide who their nominee will be, they hope to present a more unified case against Mr. Clinton. But as divided as the Democrats may be on a range of issues, the deep divisions among Republicans on social issues such as abortion, make the goal of party unity an almost unsurmountable challenge.

tors and 13 Republican members of Congress).

Since they are now the party in power, Republican congressional candidates are also now leading Democrats in fundraising.

These and other institutional factors are leading most experts to predict that while Democrats may well win back some of the seats they lost in the November 1994 elections — especially if President Clinton remains popular and wins his reelection bid — Republicans will most likely retain control of both houses of Congress in 1996.

Many politicians and pundits, both Democrats

Saudi king ends succession speculation

'The name of the heir apparent is now written in tablets of stone'

By Ashraf Fouad Reuter

DUBAI — Saudi Arabian King Fahd has ended speculation about succession at the helm of the world's largest oil exporter by handing over state affairs to his half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah while he rests after suffering a stroke, experts said on Tuesday.

"The name of the heir apparent is now written in tablets of stone," said a European oil industry analyst. "Fahd has cleared up the line of succession."

The succession issue came to the surface following the king's stroke in November. Some diplomats and oil industry experts said then that the monarch's six full brothers could find their elder half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah not the most acceptable candidate to replace the 73-year-old king.

Saudi Arabia is the world's biggest oil producer, pumping about eight million barrels of oil per day and exporting seven

million of it.

Any instability or major changes in the kingdom have traditionally had swift effects on oil prices, and energy import bills of oil-consuming countries.

Its stability is also crucial for many Western allies, especially the United States which has tens of billions of dollars worth of arms and commercial contracts with Saudi Arabia, creating tens of thousands of American jobs.

News of Monday's handover of power pushed oil prices on Tuesday in Asia up by 24 cents, with benchmark North Sea Brent for February delivery trading at \$18.60 a barrel.

Some analysts say differences exist between Crown Prince Abdullah and the influential Defence Minister Prince Sultan, although many in the conservative kingdom expect a crown prince to smoothly succeed to the throne when a king dies.

"The king has now laid to rest speculation about succession and who would (eventually) be in charge,"

said an expert on Saudi Arabia.

"All this talk about a power struggle between the crown prince and Sultan has been put to rest."

A key question being asked in Riyadh was whether the king will make a full recovery and resume his duties, diplomats said. The wording of the royal order for the handover indicated that he planned to return to his style of hands-on rule after a period of rest.

The expert said the king had once before handed power to the crown prince while he took a few months off in the late 1980s.

"The handover was done in a stately fashion as a constitutional move. It all depends on the king's health, if he improves he will come back," said a Western diplomat in Riyadh.

"My own view is that the transfer of power is permanent... We have to wait and see," he added.

The king appeared on Saudi television on Monday, standing with the aid

of a walking stick and talking with senior members of the royal family, including the heir apparent, about a year younger than himself, and Prince Sultan.

According to tradition, Prince Sultan is expected to be made crown prince if Abdullah becomes king.

A system of rule issued by the king in 1992 as part of long-promised political reforms states: "The crown prince assumes the power of the king on the latter's death and until allegiance is given."

King Fahd did not abdicate and is still head of state. He has been running the kingdom since assuming the throne in 1982 and played a key role in shaping policies as crown prince under his late half-brother King Khalid.

The first act by the crown prince since the transfer of power was the release in the name of King Fahd of the 1996 budget and an address to the nation promising a continuation of the king's rationalisation policy to cut spending.

The 150-billion-riyal (\$40 billion) budget, unchanged from last year, carries a slightly higher deficit of \$13.5 billion.

Saudi Arabia has been experiencing cash-flow shortages in recent years mainly due to a drop in oil revenues, which peaked at \$116 billion in 1981, and costs of the 1991 Gulf war which exceeded \$50 billion.

"The crown prince can now act with all the authorities of king. There will be no big differences because the kingdom is not a one man show," said the expert on Saudi affairs.

"There will be continuity because the system is stable" and runs largely by consensus among senior princes of the royal family, he added.

Crown prince Abdullah, head of the well-armed 57,000-man national guard, accepted his new task until the monarch returns to his "natural" place at the head of the state.

He told the king he would consult him when necessary. "He is not as outgoing with foreigners as King Fahd," one expert said. "The outlook will be very similar or else he would not have become crown prince."

Labour lore

ONE OF the first things that a newcomer to this beautiful land notices is the great pride which Jordanians, like all Arabs, rightly take in their language. Linguists have written extensively about this noble tongue, the richness of its vocabulary, the sophistication of its grammar and the precision of its constructions, which make it uniquely appropriate for science and technology just as much as prose and verse. This humble column will not presume to top these noteworthy efforts, but to draw attention to a little discussed aspect of the Arabic tongue: its wealth of platitudes.

If one accepts the notion that a language is a reflection of the society that uses it, and in the context of which it develops, then one would readily find the explanation for this particular aspect of the wealth of the Arabic tongue. You see, when a Jordanian tradesman, regardless of his profession, is contracted to do a job of work, it would never occur to him to do it well, and to finish it on time. Therefore, tradesmen have developed over the centuries a vast lexicon, the objective of which is to placate the irate customers and to make him pay twice as much for a shoddy job.

It all starts with the negotiation of the contract, whereupon no matter what deadline you propose the workman will say: Inshallah. He is right, of course. Nothing would happen in this world unless God wills and permits it; but the essential point is that linking the achievement of the task to divine intervention absolves the workman from any responsibility for the completion of the job on time. Of course one could pose the question whether the Almighty should need to intervene personally for a room to be painted or for an electric switch to be repaired within a reasonable deadline, and why the Compassionate and Merciful seems invariably not to will that the job be finished on time; but such reflections are purely theoretical.

More pertinent is the thought that the workmanship is invariably inferior, and the finish, at best, is dangerously mediocre. This is not a reflection on the professionalism of Jordanian tradesmen, but on their linguistic prowess and creativity. Their eloquence soars to great heights as they explain to the customer why the light switches are painted over; why the flick of the switch fails to turn the lights on, but sets the house on fire; why door frames are separated from the walls to which they should be attached by several inches; why the doors, instead of revolving on their hinges come out in your hand; or why the windows are firmly fixed in a position halfway between open and shut.

To appreciate the unique flavour of modern Arabic at its best, you should capture one of these moments. You hear expressions which no other language succeeds in capturing except by approximation such as "bimshi" or "mashi halo" (it will do); "bisir kheir" (good things will happen); "wakkal ala Allah" (have faith in God); or the inimitable and untranslatable "min hone la hone". With such a beautiful language to savour, why waste valuable time working?

feature
King receive

Jordan exp

Palestinians ad

Prince Abdul

King receives Barak

(Continued from page 1)

The King also said he supported developments on the Syrian track, reiterating that Jordan seeks a comprehensive regional peace.

"We hope that efforts made by all concerned will produce peace in this region," the King said.

The King confirmed that he will visit Israel next week to take part in ceremonies to honour those who have contributed to the cause of peace and to call on two Jordanian soldiers who are being treated in Israeli hospitals.

The King said the visit was scheduled for an earlier time but was postponed after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Responding to a question on the Jordanian people's stand on the peace with Israel, the King said "it is natural that people take a bit of time" before they adjust to the new situation but stressed that the overwhelming majority of Jordanians are supportive of peace.

In a joint press conference with Mr. Barak, Foreign Minister Kabirji reiterated that peace in the Middle East should be fair and comprehensive, adding that the "balanced and just" agreements which Jordan signed with Israel could be a model for others to follow.

In addition to the peace process, Mr. Barak discussed in his talks with the Jordanian officials the King's coming visit to Israel as well as the situation in Iraq. The visit is scheduled for Jan. 10 and is expected to last for one day only.

But Mr. Barak declined comment on the talks over Iraq, saying only that "we both live in this area and exchange views" on developments in it.

Addressing the same issue, the King said that Jordan is ready to help the Iraqis to engage in a dialogue that will help them save their country and agree on a vision for its future.

Among the issues discussed in the talks between Mr. Kabirji and his Israeli counterpart was the fate of 40 Jordanian prisoners in Israel. Mr. Kabirji said "we are

heading towards some kind of a formula whereby most of the prisoners will be released."

Addressing Syrian-Israeli talks which resumed in the U.S. last week, Mr. Kabirji said "we are very comfortable with the developments on the Syrian track."

"The Syrians have started addressing substantial issues, and (moved away) from technicalities," said Mr. Kabirji, expressing optimism that the negotiations will achieve more progress during the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the region next week.

He said that Israelis have informed Jordan that they are hearing positive language from the Syrians that is conducive to optimism about the negotiations.

But Mr. Barak, who briefed the King on progress in the talks with Syria, stressed that it was still too early to judge the outcome of what he said will be long negotiations to achieve peace on that track.

However, he said, the first steps create some kind of optimism. Mr. Barak indirectly criticised Syria for the attacks that Hizbullah party launched recently on Israelis in occupied South Lebanon and north Israel.

"Syria can suppress Hizbullah if it wanted," Mr. Barak told reporters at the Prime Ministry.

"But the blame had to be directed towards Hizbullah which must bear the consequences of its action," said Mr. Barak, who added that his country "would think of the most appropriate manner to respond if Hizbullah continues its attacks against Israel."

The Israeli minister said that the Lebanese government should also be responsible for restraining Hizbullah.

Journalists accompanying Mr. Barak on his visit to the Kingdom held a meeting with their Jordanian counterparts to exchange views on the peace process.

The meeting, which was held at Prince Hassan's office, was attended by the president of the Jordan Press Association and by chief editors of Jordanian newspapers.

Jordan expects

(Continued from page 1)

Government spending for the year will be 150 billion riyals (\$40 billion), with revenues expected to total only 131.5 billion riyals (\$35 billion).

As the world's leading oil exporter, Saudi Arabia is still a wealthy nation that's in no danger of bankruptcy.

But the economy has been sputtering for several years due to moderate oil prices and the cost of the 1991 Gulf war, for which the Saudis spent in excess of \$50 billion.

Crown Prince Abdullah said Monday the "new budget indicated that Saudi Arabia will go ahead with its policy for rationalising government expenditure."

The announcement was seen as an attempt to reassure world oil markets which become jittery whenever there is uncertainty in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom pumps 8 million barrels of oil a day, more than 10 per cent of the world's daily requirements.

Palestinians advance

(Continued from page 1)

and plastering their constituencies with campaign posters since mid-December.

Meanwhile, the only three members of the Islamic Movement Hamas who were signed up to run in this month's Palestinian elections announced Tuesday that they were pulling out to "end the confusion" caused by their

candidacies."

The council, the first ever elected body from the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank could hold the key to establishing a division of powers in the Palestinian self-rule government, currently dominated by the office of its chairman, Yasser Arafat.

Prince Abdullah

(Continued from page 1)

power base of the regime. These tribesmen owe loyalty to their commander. And this binds their tribes to his person.

The crown prince's smooth, unchallenged, even unremarkable elevation conforms to the pattern of a Sudairi son being succeeded by a non-Sudairi son. Prince Sultan, the next Sudairi son in line after King Fahd, is slated to be appointed Crown Prince once Prince Abdullah is proclaimed king. Prince Sultan holds the posts of second deputy prime minister and defence minister in

the present government. Judged by his appearance, Saudi Arabia's new ruler would seem to be a stocky, stolid, pugnacious man. He is, in fact, a gentle, retiring person. He has the reputation of being a populist, an Arab nationalist and more independent-minded than his half-brothers. For instance, he opposed the deployment of U.S. forces on Saudi soil during the 1990 Kuwait crisis. Prince Abdullah appears to have a wider Arab perspective than his half-brothers, perhaps because of his close relationship with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad,

By Rana Sabbagh

Reuter

DUBAI — Wealthy Gulf Arab states, their productivity maintained for years by foreign labour, face a delicate task of balancing the needs of growing ranks of local job-seekers with economic efficiency.

Unemployment is creeping into the ranks of local graduates in Bahrain, Oman and in Saudi Arabia, which alone accounts for four out of five of the region's 17 million Gulf Arab nationals, economists say.

The other three members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — all have small populations.

In the small island state of Bahrain, unemployment was among grievances aired when unrest by Shiite Muslim opponents of the government erupted last December.

For years, GCC states guaranteed full employment for their nationals by

using large oil revenues to create government jobs while employing foreigners to do specialised or menial work their citizens were either unqualified or unwilling to do.

But now they want their private sectors, dominated by foreigners who spent petrodollars to help transform their desert states into modern countries, to absorb more citizens and to fund national labour training institutes.

Businessmen say many of the unemployed are poorly educated, have unwanted skills or make excessive wage demands. "They do not like to take orders and want to run things their own way," said an Arab manager of a Saudi-based computer firm.

"The private sector is under an obligation to find jobs for citizens," Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef told a recent seminar on gradual "Saudiisation" of its private sector.

"Ours is an Islamic socie-

ty based on free market enterprise which benefited both citizens and (foreign) residents. But now the time has come for a review of this policy."

Riyadh's 1995-2000 development plan will create 660,000 jobs for Saudis, 319,000 of which will come by replacing foreigners.

In September, the kingdom ordered airlines, travel and cargo agents to allocate at least 10 per cent of jobs to Saudis within one year. It told them to aim for a five per cent annual increase in the number of employed Saudis over the next five years.

Violators would not be allowed to recruit foreign workers, renew licences or open new branches.

Oman, trying to limit an influx of foreigners and deal with rising demand for employment by nationals, earlier this year imposed a tax on private sector employers who hired expatriates.

It has an active program-

me to "omanise" its labour force.

Kuwait, despite its post-Gulf war policy of nationalising its workforce after more than 250,000 Palestinians left because of the crisis, has not had much success.

Economists say its civil service will find it very difficult to provide jobs for the large number of local job-hunters due to come onto the labour market before the end of the century.

Some Kuwaiti deputies say the only long-term solution is to restructure the economy gradually to encourage private sector growth and offer incentives for firms to employ Kuwaitis.

But the task of restructuring GCC labour forces is tough.

"The process of nationalisation of the workforce in the region must be given added impetus without losing economic efficiency," Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Jeddah-based National Commercial

Bank, told Reuters.

"The challenge is to devise a system of recruitment, selection, training and replacement for Gulf nationals whereby the dependence on expatriate labour is progressively reduced without experiencing a serious drop in efficiency or a loss of economic competitiveness."

Expatriate manpower accounts for 90 per cent of the workforce in the UAE, 83 per cent in Qatar, 82 per cent in Kuwait, 69 per cent in Saudi and around 60 per cent in Bahrain and Oman, according to Gulf economists.

Women hardly figure in Arab Gulf labour statistics because of the region's strict cultural traditions.

All six GCC states face modest economic growth compared with the oil boom of the 1970s and have rapidly growing populations.

Total GCC population, including foreigners, will rise to 39.4 million by 2010

from around 26 million now — including nine million expatriates — studies and official figures show.

Those under the age of 19, on the verge of joining the job market, would rise to 21 million from 13.2 million — another eight million people in the labour market.

Social and cultural differences between conservative nationals and more liberal foreigners and high costs of health and other services are also concerns.

Economists say rising unemployment could spill into internal unrest if new jobs are not created in the next 15 years.

"Planners and decision makers must ... attempt to create enough jobs for the newcomers or face the alternative — severe unemployment with possibilities of social and political extremism. All available signs point to the latter happening," Kuwaiti economist Jassem Al Saadoun said earlier this year.

GCC states in bind over foreign labour

Saudi crown prince may be less open to West

By Ashraf Fouad Reuter

DUBAI — Crown Prince Abdullah, who was handed the running of government by his half-brother King Fahd on Monday, is widely seen as a tough traditionalist who could prove to be less open to the West.

The monarch of the world's largest oil producer and exporter issued a royal decree handing the affairs of state to the crown prince so the king can rest after suffering a stroke in November. But King Fahd did not abdicate.

"He is not as outgoing with foreigners like King Fahd," a diplomat said of the 71-year-old crown prince.

But the differences are expected to be in style rather than in core policy, many Arab analysts say.

"The outlook will be very similar or else he would not have become crown prince," one said.

Diplomats often refer to Crown Prince Abdullah's strong pan-Arab leaning, especially his close ties with Syria.

Arab analysts say unless a consensus within the family had been reached in 1982 when he replaced King Fahd as crown prince, Prince Abdullah could have been dropped from the running for the kingdom's highest post.

Saudi Arabia places much emphasis on its relationship with the United States and the West in general. Ties with Washington date back to 1932 when King Abdul Aziz,

founder of Saudi Arabia, granted an oil exploration concession to a U.S. firm.

Crown Prince Abdullah has the handicap of having only half-brothers within the Saudi royal family.

Full brothers and their sons tend to side together at family meetings when a consensus is sought on crucial issues and strategic decisions.

But as head of the well-armed 57,000-man national guard he enjoys wide tribal backing in the desert kingdom.

Crown Prince Abdullah is one of the more than 30 surviving sons of King Abdul Aziz. The late king, popularly known as Ibn Saud, had 44 sons by 22 wives and died in 1953.

The Saudi throne has traditionally moved from brother to brother among Ibn Saud's sons although some were bypassed and excluded for medical, political and other reasons.

According to the kingdom's basic system of rule, decreed by King Fahd in 1992, a crown prince automatically assumes the throne when a monarch dies until allegiance is made by citizens and royal family, tribal, religious and other leaders.

Ibn Saud was succeeded by his sons King Saud, King Faisal who was stabbed to death in 1975 by a nephew, King Khalid who died in 1982, and King Fahd — main architect of Riyadh's policies for the past two decades and a dominant force in Gulf Arab affairs.

Crown Prince Abdullah,

an avid horseman, has been in charge of the national guard since 1962. He has rejected pressure to merge the guard with the 100,000-man armed forces headed by his half-brother King Sultan, diplomats say.

An official Saudi Arabian profile says the crown prince acquired many virtues from his father: "Probity, correct conduct, munificence, charity, love for his fellow countrymen, humility and religious devotion."

The latter is of much importance in the conservative and predominantly Sunni Muslim kingdom, home to two of Islam's holiest shrines in the closed cities of Mecca and Medina, which implements the strict sharia Islamic law.

Prince Sultan, 68, is one of six full brothers to King Fahd and is the top candidate to become crown prince Prince Abdullah assumes the throne. He has been minister of defence and aviation and inspector general since 1962.

King Fahd is prime minister, with Crown Prince Abdullah first deputy and Prince Sultan second deputy prime minister.

The mainly U.S.-trained national guard, in which tribal forces have a large presence, is charged with defending the kingdom's strategic installations, including oil producing and exporting facilities.

In U.S.-run training centre in the capital Riyadh was the target of a car bomb on November 13 in which five Americans and two Indians



Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz

were killed and 60 wounded.

Crown Prince Abdullah was educated in the kingdom by private tutors and is not known to speak English.

At national celebrations,

he often picks up a sword and

joins performing tribesmen in traditional bedouin dances. He founded the kingdom's equestrian club, which holds frequent horse races, to re-

vive the Arab tradition of horsemanship.

He has six sons, including Prince Mithab who is deputy chief of the national guard.

Deputies criticise

(Continued from page 1)

tioned the government over the absence of some sources of revenues in the draft budget.

He said the draft budget did not include the Kingdom's revenues of the potash company, the phosphate company, and revenues that come to the state Treasury from the tourist sites as well as revenues of international airport and land services for foreign planes.

"Where is the record of all of these profits and why haven't they been registered as revenues of the Treasury... We as representatives of the people have the right to know where this money is spent," he continued.

Centrist Deputy Ahmad Qudah was one of the few deputies who landed the gov-

ernment's policies, especially concerning "the government's effort towards self-independence and increasing the national savings and the reduction in the deficit in the balance of payment as well as its keenness to promote the tourism sector."

The government had pledged to take the appropriate measures to reduce foreign debts and to decrease public expenditure, support the youth sector, fight poverty, alleviate unemployment and maintain balanced economic programmes.

"I appreciate the government's (decision to continue) to subsidise basic commodities, the bread in particular," Deputy Qudah said. "I also appreciate the government's orientation to support the

Armed Forces and our security apparatus."

Nevertheless, Deputy Qudah complained that the government did not take note of the House's recommendations listed during last year's discussions of the 1995 draft budget.

Also, "the government did not include in its draft budget the aid and grants to the Kingdom. The draft budget does not reflect the real image of price hikes in the Kingdom," he said, adding that the unemployment rate of 15 per cent is very high.

"We have passed the era of peace-making. Now we should embark on building our country," he said. "But if we were to live in a comfortable and secure environment, we should be looking into the poverty and unemployment problems. The increase in salaries should be in line with

the inflation."

The government promised earlier to give a monthly salary increase of JD 10 to government employees as of the beginning of the month of May. However, deputies on Tuesday insisted that the increase was very low and should be effective as of January.

Hamzeh Mansour, spokesperson of the 17-member IAF bloc, complained that the draft budget had not presented a solution to the most pressing problems of unemployment and price hikes and said that the increase in salaries should be higher. Citing figures of the National Society for the Protection of the Consumer, Mr. Hamzeh said that there was an increase in the prices of more than 70 commodities.

"The attempt of the government to solve this prob-

lem with a JD 10 monthly salary increase is not enough," he said. "Increase in salaries should go hand in hand with price hikes."

Deputy Mansour called on the government to give an explanation for lifting subsidies on some of the basic commodities and give the reasons for the decrease in profits of the Central Bank.

Deputy Talal Obeidat, centrist, complained that most of the Treasury's revenues were based on collecting taxes from Jordanians and said that the government's report lacked concern to the country's national production of certain commodities such as wheat.

"The 1996 budget is of no difference from the previous budgets," he said. "It is only an estimate and its revenues are based on taxes and cus-

oms, especially the sales tax — a heavy burden on the citizen."

"There was no mention of government plans to alleviate poverty and unemployment," he continued. "I call on the government to make the increase in salaries JD 25 and to make it effective as of January 1."

The speech of Deputy Mifteh Ruheimi, member of the National Action Front bloc, which is led by Abdul Hadi Majali, mostly reflected on his constituency's demands, such as improving infrastructural services and opening clinics.

The House will continue discussions of the draft budget today. Twenty six deputies are expected to take the floor before the government replies to their speeches and House votes on the draft budget.

Syria, Israel

(Continued from page 1)

1996 should be the year of peace with the Jewish state.

But the official daily Tishreen reiterated Syria's demand that Israel commit itself to a complete and early withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"As the end of 1995 witnesses the reactivation of the peace process on the Syrian track, 1996 should be the year of peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks," Tishreen said.

"This requires Israel to engage practically in the process and to speed it up because the Israeli extremists are preparing to destroy the peace if they find any hesitation in the

adoption of the decisive decisions which would pave the way for peace."

Tishreen said that unlike his predecessor Yitzhak Rabin, Mr. Peres said he wanted a comprehensive peace and that Middle East peace would be impossible without Syria.

"We recall that the previous Israeli government had launched a campaign of accusations against Syria while we found the contrary from the current Israeli government which publicly said that comprehensive peace without Syria would be impossible," Tishreen said.

In occupied Jerusalem, Mr. Peres told a meeting of deputies from his Labour Party that the two sides were still seeking common ground

on which to negotiate rather than taking up substantive issues.

The same message was given earlier Tuesday by Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to Washington and the number two negotiator behind foreign ministry official Uri Savir.

"There have not been any agreements at this stage" Mr. Rabinovich said of the first three-day round. "This is not necessarily negative."

"It will only be possible to evaluate how the talks are going once U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher visits the region," he said. "I don't think any decisions will be taken before then."

Mr. Christopher is expected to travel again to the Middle East on Jan.

Services sector receives largest investments in '95

AMMAN (Petra) — Total investments in Jordan during 1995 amounted to JD 276,520,216, registering a 7.4 per cent growth over the previous year's figures, according to an announcement Tuesday by Investment Promotion Corporation (IPC) Director Taleh Rifai.

The services sector acquired the lion's share in these investments accounting for 46.8 per cent of the total investments, translated into JD 129,504,450, said Dr. Rifai in summing up the year's economic growth.

Dr. Rifai pointed out in particular to the hotels sector where he said JD 88,404,450 were invested adding that these developments run in harmony with the government's policies and plans for giving investment in the tourism sector a greater attention.

He said that for the first time in the Kingdom's history the number of tourists visiting the country was over one million, adding that tourism accounts for 11 per cent of the national revenue, and is a major earner of foreign currency.

Referring to the Amman Economic Summit, Dr. Rifai said that since that conference, Jordan has witnessed a deluge of requests and enquiries from would be and potential investors, noting that most of these enquiries were about industry, tourism and livestock wealth.

In the light of this favourable situation, said Dr. Rifai, Jordan can attract huge capitals in 1996 to be invested in industry and tourism and at the Amman Financial Market

provided the Kingdom created an opportune climate for investors and investments.

He noted that the main aim of the IPC was two fold: Ensure efficiency of organisations at the domestic front and promoting Jordan's investment privileges in the Kingdom.

He said that the endorsement of the investment law and its affiliated regulations and the creation of the IPC require subsequent administrative and legal changes adding that it is up to the special investment promotion committee to take these measures.

Dr. Rifai announced that the committee which failed to meet in November 1995 to start enforcing the IPC law, is due to hold its first meeting on Jan. 6.

Stop printing money, Iraqi president orders

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has ordered his government to stop printing money to try to contain runaway inflation and a plummeting dinar, Baghdad newspapers reported Tuesday.

The Iraqi dinar has lost almost 20 per cent of its value against the dollar over the past two weeks while food prices have soared because of the continuing impact of international sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Iraq's three official newspapers, state radio and television carried the text of President Saddam's address to a cabinet meeting in which he said drastic economic measures were needed.

He called for an immediate halt to the printing of money, for belt-tightening measures in state ministries and enterprises, imposition of new taxes and sale of state property.

Baghdad-based diplomats said the new measures indicated that Iraq did not expect the U.N.-imposed sanctions to be eased in 1996 and that the Iraqi government would resist pressure to accept U.N. terms that would allow limited sales of its oil.

The dollar was trading at about 2,900 dinars on Tuesday, up from 2,500 in mid-December. One kilogramme of sugar has jumped to 1,600 dinars from 1,300, chicken to 4,000 from 3,000 and lentils, the poor man's diet, to 1,600 from 1,000.

There are no official figures on the amount of money in circulation. The official press reported last year that the government had paid Iraqi farmers a stagger-

ing 400 billion dinars for their wheat and barley harvests which is now being sold at giveaway rates to the public.

Official inflation figures are not available but a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report last year said food prices had rocketed by 4,000 to 5,000 times since sanctions began.

President Saddam said new taxes and increases in the cost of state services to meet costs involved would withdraw excess dinars from circulation.

The government has already unveiled some measures. Hundreds of state cars, including some used by the president and his office, are being sold to the public. The trade ministry has

been selling refrigerators, air-conditioners, spare parts, carpets, television sets, watches, clothes and other household items at prices 10 per cent below the going market rate.

Traders in Baghdad said at least one billion dinars were entering state coffers every day.

The government has recently raised the fees paid by Iraqis wishing to travel abroad to 400,000 dinars from 200,000.

President Saddam made clear in his message that there would be no increase in salaries in 1996 but at the same time promised to protect the living standards of low-income civil servants who make up one fourth of

Iraq's 20 million people. There are strong indications that the government would reconsider the artificially low prices for water, electricity and petrol.

The electricity bill of a house in Baghdad with four air-conditioners running non-stop for 24 hours during the four-month summer season rarely goes beyond 500 dinars — about 16 U.S. cents.

Petrol is a fraction of the price of bottled water in Baghdad with a litre of the former costing 0.2 per cent of a dinar while water goes for 1,500 dinars.

Workers at petrol stations say transport costs the government more than it now charges for its oil products.

Saudi Arabia to push ahead with economic reforms in '96

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia plans to push ahead with reforms in 1996 to put the economy of the world's largest oil producer and exporter on a firmer footing after years of huge budget deficits.

"The budget plan will continue the course of Saudi Arabia's economic reform programme... it still can't afford to relax," a Western economic attaché told Reuters Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia has experienced cash-flow shortages in recent years, mainly due to a drop in oil revenues which peaked at \$116 billion in 1981, and costs of the Gulf war which exceeded \$50 billion.

The budget decrees were issued Monday in the name of King Fahd, who earlier in the day turned over the affairs of state to his half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah while the monarch rests after a stroke in November.

The crown prince said the budget indicated that Riyadh "will go ahead with its policy for rationalising government expenditure and opening for well-defined measures for spending against revenues and making a balance between them."

A five-year plan aims to balance the budget by the year 2000.

The economy ministry was authorised to borrow to cover an 18.5 billion riyal (\$4.9 billion) projected deficit in

the 150 billion riyal 1996 budget, unchanged from last year.

Economic analysts said Riyadh was expected to secure the funds through government bonds issued to Saudi-based banks rather than through sovereign loans on the international market.

"That means Saudi Arabia will borrow through government development bonds issued on the local market, it does not mean international borrowing," said the attaché in reference to Riyadh's traditional reluctance to take sovereign loans.

Revenues for 1996 are forecast at 131.5 billion riyals, down from 135 billion in 1995 when King Fahd introduced price rises for basic services aimed at cutting capital spending through a cut in growing consumption and lower subsidies.

The 1996 deficit is higher than 1995's billion riyal forecast shortfall, while subsidies were put at 6.86 billion riyals for 1996.

Economists in the kingdom were hoping Riyadh would continue a recent practice of announcing actual deficit figures for the previous fiscal year along with the new budget.

"The main problem is that they did not give any indication if they met the target last year and what the actual deficit was in line with the past year," one said.

Saudi planners and economists told Reuters last year the kingdom was expected to record a smaller deficit than projected due to higher world oil prices.

"It seems to confirm that things are going better, if not as well as expected, because they had expected to wipe out the deficit altogether," one banker in Riyadh said.

Each \$1 change in the price of a barrel of oil means \$2.7 billion a year up or down for the revenues of Saudi Arabia, which exports about seven million of its production of eight million barrels per day.

Economists now say Riyadh spent more than projected in 1995, mainly on wages, although the government's performance was generally better than in 1994 when it recorded a \$10.7 billion deficit.

They were also expecting Riyadh to introduce a further slight price rise in 1996 to contain high consumption rates.

"One surprise in the budget could be that there seem to be no more price increases. The population is increasing, placing pressure on the government for capital expenditure" on services projects, one said.

About five million expatriates live in Saudi Arabia, where about half of the 12 million Saudis are under the age of 16.

Government bodies were

Egypt reports 4.7% growth

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — The central bank said Egypt's economy grew 4.7 per cent in the 1994-95 fiscal year, surpassing growth of 3.9 per cent in the previous year.

A summary of the bank's annual report said the growth was attributable to a five per cent increase in the country's industrial output and a 5.1 per cent rise in services.

Economists say, however, that Egypt's gross domestic product will have to grow at a rate considerably above five per cent a year if it is to create enough jobs for its growing 58 million population. Western economists put the nation's unemployment rate at 17 per cent of the work force and say thousands more are underemployed.

The bank's report said the surplus in the nation's current account amounted to \$3.3 billion Egyptian pounds (\$1.56 billion) in the 1994-95 fiscal year, which ended June 30. The current account is the broadest measure of international trade in goods and services.

It said the budget deficit widened to about three billion pounds (\$883 million) in

1994-95, compared with 2.1 billion pounds (\$618 million) a year earlier.

Among other key indicators reported by the bank for 1994-95:

— Agricultural production was valued at 23.7 billion Egyptian pounds (nearly \$7 billion).

— Industrial output was 25.1 billion pounds (\$7.38 billion).

— Oil and petroleum output was 13.4 billion pounds (\$3.94 billion).

Tourism recovered significantly in the second half of 1995 after months of lackluster performance because of attacks by Muslim extremists attempting to undercut the nation's secular regime.

Oil and tourism are among Egypt's largest earners of foreign currency, along with tolls from the Suez Canal and money sent home by Egyptians working abroad.

Israelis, Palestinians form joint business centre in Gaza

EREZ, Gaza Strip (AFP) — Israel and the Palestinian Authority inaugurated their first international business centre here Tuesday to promote investments in the Palestinian territories.

Colonel Dov Tsedaka, an official involved in the centre located at this main crossing point between Israel and Gaza Strip, said the aim was to attract Israeli, Palestinian and foreign executives hoping to do business in the autonomous Palestinian areas.

"Boosting business ties between Israelis and Palestinians will help reduce the temptation to carry out attacks against Israel," the Israeli officer said.

Organisers of the Erez International Business Centre said they hoped to promote the creation of industrial zones in Gaza and along the

"green line" separating Israel from the autonomous areas here and on the West Bank.

A key aim is to reduce the high level of unemployment among Palestinians, they said.

The centre was inaugurated by Colonel Tsedaka, chief liaison officer with the Palestinians here, and the head of the Palestinian civilian committee in Gaza, Frej Al Kheiri.

Jordan Times
Tel: 684311/
699634

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Concentrate on business affairs and know exactly how to handle them in the morning today, and then later you can get the added data you need.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get your appearance improved in a more modern way today, and then later this evening you can handle monetary affairs with great success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get out in the world of activity early in the morning today and get much completed in a constructive manner after you have gotten rid of a grouch.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) There may be a delay in attaining some day-time goal today, but be patient and it will soon be yours in terms of your success.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Use tact in handling a bigwig in the morning today, so that you gain the favour you want, then later this evening you can be with good friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You had better study some new enterprise very carefully today before you put it in operation, and then you can get much accomplished on a new project.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Early in the morning today handle your obligations well since later this evening new interests may come to your attention which could be very beneficial.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Plan how to come to a better understanding with an overly sensitive individual and then you can get much accomplished on a new project.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you try a new method where your career activities are concerned you get beneficial results, then later today you can be with good friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Listening carefully to a mate's ideas today will make it possible to get your environment improved and beautiful. Be cooperative.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take the bull by the horns and clear up that long-standing situation at home, then later today be off to amusements you like with close friends and loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get the right solution for continual difficulties at this time. Find the best way to please your partners before you do any entertaining.

Birthstone of January: Garnet, rose Quartz

THE Daily Crossword by Lee G. Barrow

ACROSS

- 1 Anthropoids
- 5 Round
- 10 Coffee
- 14 Farmer's locale?
- 15 Investigate (with into)
- 16 Core of a nerve fiber
- 17 Concert halls
- 18 Pungent bulb
- 19 Coin
- 20 Cyclorama/bold football play
- 23 Go in
- 24 Lead removers
- 26 Aves.
- 28 Desert
- 33 Propane, in Hawaii
- 34 Inner self
- 35 Coat
- 36 Illegal rebales/gives in
- 38 Trumpeter Al
- 42 Trail user
- 43 Wing
- 44 Inane
- 47 National monogram
- 50 Audition fare
- 52 Hammerin' Hank
- 54 Ruin/retreat
- 58 Cross a stream
- 61 Like the inside of a chimney
- 62 Composer Paul
- 63 Satanic
- 64 Mistake
- 65 Layer
- 66 Absurd
- 67 Part of a Mae West quote
- 68 "I could — horse!"

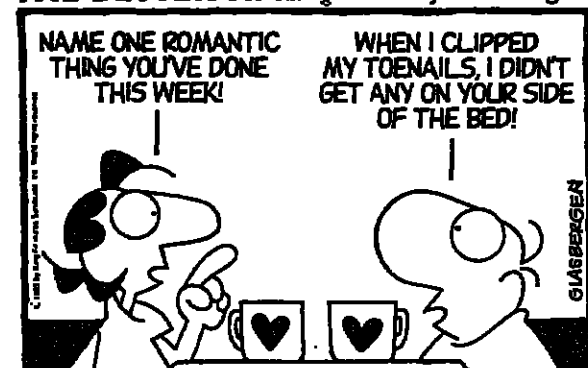
DOWN

- 1 Snick houses
- 2 Formalist
- 3 Opts
- 4 Quench
- 5 Smell
- 6 Gambling town
- 7 Radar item
- 8 Called up
- 9 Actor Robert
- 10 Playing cards
- 11 Chop
- 12 Werner — Braun
- 13 Formicary denizen
- 21 Imbided
- 22 Container
- 25 Plenty
- 26 Horne color
- 27 — ammoniac
- 30 Clothing protector
- 31 Dr.'s org.
- 32 Mexican food
- 34 Play a part
- 35 In favor of
- 36 Weight unit
- 37 Qum's land
- 38 A Carson
- 39 Slalom
- 40 Sticker
- 41 Emoter
- 44 UN agcy.
- 45 Searches for
- 46 Neglect
- 47 Muse of astronomy
- 48 Type of wrench
- 49 Turkish city
- 51 In a strange way
- 53 Lessen
- 55 Cast or shadow
- 56 Minute particle
- 57 Harp-like instrument
- 58 Mediterranean hat
- 59 Eggs
- 60 — Tin Tin

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

SPAT REDS DEMIT
TOUR HAIL OLIVE
ALTA ECCE CONAN
GOFF THE DEEPEND
ART DANE
STALE HIRT LIS
LODGE ANT SENT
EMMA COUGH OMNI
PEER OPT YAMMER
TIN TREE REARS
GOIN TAP
MAKES ABIG SPLASH
ARIES ODEA ANTI
MANSE OLOR COLE
EGGED KEGS ENOS

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



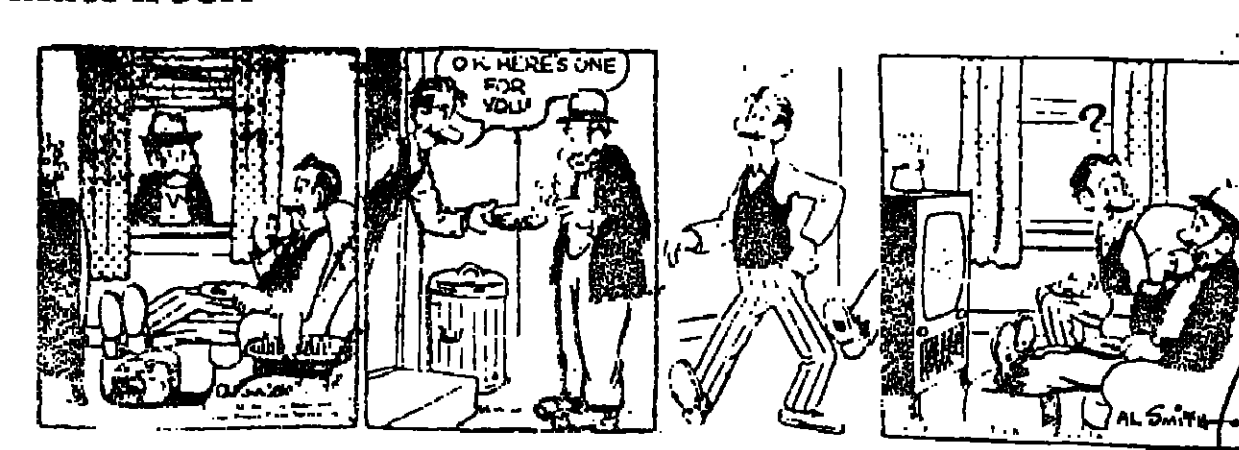
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



ATT to cut 40,000 jobs, take \$6b charge

NEW YORK (R) — ATT Corp. said Tuesday it plans to cut nearly 40,000 jobs and take a pre-tax charge of about \$6 billion to cover the costs of splitting itself into three companies.

The telecommunications giant said about 30,000 of the job cuts will be involuntary, after a disappointing response by employees to a voluntary buyout package last year.

ATT, which announced in September the biggest voluntary corporate breakup in U.S. history, said about 70 per cent of the job reductions will be completed by the end of this year and the rest within three years.

The company said the planned staff reductions, facility closings and asset writedowns will result in a post-tax charge of \$4 billion, or about \$2.50 a share, against its fourth-quarter results.

ATT's net income for the first nine months of 1995 was \$2.82 billion, or \$1.77 a share. For all of 1994, its profits were \$4.7 billion, or \$3.01 a share.

The company's stock surged \$2.75 to \$67.50 on the New York Stock Exchange in early trading after the announcement.

"The reduction in our work force will be the most difficult and painful step

we've had to take in this restructuring process," Chairman Robert Allen said in a statement.

"But I believe the reductions and other actions are absolutely essential if our businesses are to be competitive. This is a key milestone that puts us right on track in our plan to create three new companies that will be positioned as strongly as possible to succeed in their markets," he added.

The moves announced Tuesday primarily affect the new ATT Company, which will provide telecommunications services, and the new Systems and Technology Company, which will provide

network, business and consumer technology and equipment.

The charges and staff reductions are in addition to cuts announced in September by the company's computer unit, ATT Global Information Solutions (GIS). GIS said it would eliminate 8,500 jobs, and ATT took a post-tax charge of \$1.17 billion in the third quarter for this and other actions.

The company said that the total reductions include about 10,000 corporate-wide staff jobs in areas such as information systems, human resources and financial operations.

The remaining reductions, to occur within the operating units of the two new com-

panies, include about 6,000 administrative and support positions, ATT said.

The majority of the job cuts will be in U.S.-based operations.

ATT said it also plans to reduce the value of some assets, including United, its Canadian telecommunications venture, and several other international units.

The company said it will also modify several of its services, which will require writing down the value of some proprietary software and hardware. ATT will also write down the value of some unneeded network facilities, such as microwave towers, and refocus its undersea cable operations.

Kuwait reports record stocks activity in 1995

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's stock market surged to record levels in 1995 as the Gulf emirate pressed ahead with reforms to revive its economy which was hurt by weak oil prices and the 1990 Iraqi invasion, officials said Tuesday.

Turnover jumped by around 242 per cent to nearly \$6.5 billion in 1995 while the 1,000-point share index surged by 38 per cent or by 371 points, the stock exchange's director, Hisham Al Otaibi, said.

"This reflects the growing investors' confidence in the market," he told the official news agency KUNA. "I hope the growth will continue in 1996, which indicates stronger economic activity and more economic growth rates."

He said actual activity in 1995 was higher as the figure did not include shares sold off by the government to the public in privatisation programmes, part of reforms launched after the liberation of Kuwait in early 1991.

The surge in 1995 made the Kuwaiti market the biggest exchange in the Arab World in terms of turnover. Saudi Arabia was the second biggest in 1995, when share turnover peaked at around \$6.05 billion.

Around 50 banks and companies trade their shares on the Kuwaiti exchange, which was badly damaged by the Iraqi invasion in August 1990.

Experts said the high activity was due to economic reforms, a growth in the profits of trading institutions and speculation by investors. This is in contrast with the markets in Oman, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where speculation is virtually absent.

Mr. Otaibi gave no figures for the market capitalisation of the trading institutions but previous figures showed it stood at \$10.7 billion at the start of 1995.

Some restaurants in Paris booked for new year ... 1999

PARIS (R) — Some of Paris's top restaurants say they are already fully booked for new year festivities on the eve of the new millennium in 1999.

The French daily Liberation published a survey showing that some of the city's richest gourmets, planning how to celebrate the new millennium, had made reservations years ago for the night of Dec. 31, 1999.

It said the Tour d'Argent and Maxim's were among restaurants saying all tables were taken. The Tour d'Argent had bookings from clients in the United States and Japan as well as Europe to see in the year 2000.

Others, like the Jules Verne Restaurant half-way up the Eiffel Tower, were refusing to consider bookings before 1999 despite receiving dozens of enquiries. Liberation said some restaurants reported no bookings and laughed at the very question of a table in four years' time.

It said Maxim's would serve a new year menu little changed since the 1930s, including lobster, caviar, truffles and foie gras pate — now costing 2,450 francs (\$500 per person).

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3589/90	Canada n dollar	1.4325/35
	1.4325/35	Deutschemarks	1.6040/50
	1.6040/50	Dutch guilders	1.1550/60
	1.1550/60	Swiss francs	29.44/48
	29.44/48	Belgian francs	4.8924/74
	4.8924/74	French francs	157.99/4
	157.99/4	Italian lire	103.80/90
	103.80/90	Japanese yen	6.6050/50
	6.6050/50	Norwegian crowns	5.5432/42
	5.5432/42	Danish crowns	1.4144/54
	1.4144/54	Singapore dollars	0.7428/33
	0.7428/33	Australian dollars	7.7332/42
One sterling	\$1.5505/15		
One ounce of gold	\$388.75/389.25		

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Produce merchants top list of violators for price manipulation

★ THE NUMBER of violations of the Supply Law — price manipulation, selling food unfit for human consumption, forging expirydates on products and concealing or refusing to sell food stuffs — nearly doubled last year to 25.4 thousand violations compared to about 13,000 in 1994. Merchants selling vegetables and fruits topped the list of violators by accounting for 21.9 per cent or an average of 5,560 violations. Bakeries and restaurants were second as their violations accounted for 15 per cent or an average of 3,818, followed by poultry and egg traders who were issued 1937 violation notices, or 7.6 per cent. There was a total of 4,073 violations for not displaying prices on products, or 16 per cent. Most of the violators were fined either less than JD 30 or between JD 30 to JD 300 which is the highest fine. Observers at the Ministry of Supply stressed that there is an urgent need to reconsider the penalties to make them more effective and deterrent as a merchant, in light of what is currently in force, doubles his prices to compensate what he will pay in fines (Al Rai).

Central Bank denies banning dealings in Israeli shekels

★ AN OFFICIAL source at the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) denied issuing a circular to banks and financial and money changing companies banning them from dealing in Israeli shekels. The source said the bank does not issue instructions for currencies dealings in the Jordanian market. He clarified that on Dec. 4, 1995 the CBJ requested banks and financial and money changing companies to treat the state of Israel, its currency and its citizens the same treatment accorded to any other foreign country. This request was made on the strength of a memorandum issued by the minister of justice regarding the cancellation of laws on the boycott of Israel, the source explained. He said the CBJ usually issues instructions regarding the cancellation of a country's currency on the issuance of a new denomination and the specifications of that currency but the bank does not oblige any party to deal in the currencies of any specific country and the only obligation is implemented on the Jordanian dinar.

Meanwhile, a number of money changers said that there has been no dealings in the shekel in the local market although the Israeli currency is treated like any other foreign currency. A shekel is worth 215 fils (buying) and 220 fils (selling) (Al Rai).

Refinery losing from gas sales

★ JORDAN PETROLEUM Refinery Company General Manager Abdul Wahab Al Zu'bi has denied any intention to raise prices of petroleum products at the present despite pressure from the World Bank. He said that the government was the party that set the prices, but that according to his knowledge there is no intention to hike prices of petroleum products as they are close to international levels. As for gas sales, the company's chief said that the cost to produce a cylinder of gas is JD 3.300 and by selling it to distributors at JD 1.65 and to consumers for JD 2.000 the company was incurring large losses. But still, and due to high demand from low-income groups, the government opted to keep prices unchanged. Mr. Zu'bi said that the refinery produces between 400 to 450 tonnes of gas each day but daily consumption at present is about 1,100 tonnes. Noting that gas supplies from Iraq do not exceed 40 tonnes, per day, compared to 200 tonnes in the past, Mr. Zu'bi added, the company has been able to cover the shortage through 30,600 tonnes of gas imports until the end of last year. With 10,000 tonnes of gas in storage and by importing an additional 30,000 tonnes during January and February of this year, the problem of gas supplies would be fundamentally solved, Mr. Zu'bi pointed out (Al Rai).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOUSING MARKET CENTER - AMMAN			
TELEPHONE: 607172 / 607173			
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 02/01/1996			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE IN JORDAN DINARS	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PSC	420	26970	231.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	460	2030	4.400
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	950	1159	1.240
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	150	377	2.500
THE HOUSING BANK	800	4375	5.460
JORDAN KUNAF BANK	525	1868	3.540
JORDAN GULF BANK	12685	13863	1.110
ARAB INVESTMENT BANK	250	975	3.950
SEIT REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FOR HUNTING	500	1618	3.260
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7020	7194	1.020
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	5000	29280	5.800
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	16654	25293	1.520
BANKS SECTOR	48368	184836	INDEX NUMBER: 155.26
			CHANGE: -1.63
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	54509	95868	1.750
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1850	3348	1.800
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1515	1515	1.010
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	2550	2964	1.170
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	950	655	0.700
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMUNITY TRUST	2500	5550	2.200
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	850	2915	3.420
ARAB TRADING CENTRE	3650	4384	1.210
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	6500	14896	2.290
SERVICES SECTOR	74299	132117	INDEX NUMBER: 130.10
			CHANGE: -1.40
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	128363	479568	3.650
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1450	4955	3.370
THE ARAB POTASH	6800	20420	3.000
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	11887	11260	10.270
JORDAN BANKING	247	1727	7.000
WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	250	350	1.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	2149	7616	3.500
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	4723	21428	4.520
ARAB CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	200	2440	12.200
SPINNING & WEAVING	250	450	1.800
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	205	1084	5.300
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	7500	4565	0.600
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	11750	17105	1.450
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	10022	29748	2.970
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	500	852	1.700
JORDAN ROPEWORK INDUSTRIES	7350	8264	1.120
UNIVERSITY CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	600	2040	3.400
INDUSTRIAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	9250	36075	4.000
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	2280	7149	3.170
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	37650	77628	2.060
JORDAN CABLE COMPANY	8500	5874	6.900
EL-ZAKARIYAH MANUFACTURING CO.	4050	9156	2.250
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	7171	10097	1.390
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLES OIL INDUSTRY	3400	5538	1.620
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	281923	900479	INDEX NUMBER: 125.78
			CHANGE: -3.31
GRAND TOTAL	403275	1217432	INDEX NUMBER: 156.07
			CHANGE: -1.95
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET	219750		
VALUE TRADED IN AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET	319541		

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Financial Markets			
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 29/12/95	HongKong Close 2/1/96	
Sterling Pound	1.5515	1.5443	
Deutsche Mark	1.4355	1.5465	
Swiss Franc	1.1555	1.1522**	
French Franc	4.9065	4.8992**	
Japanese Yen	103.40	103.30	
European Currency Unit	1.2728	1.2785**	
* USD per ECU ** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT			
Forexcurrency Insurance Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.37	5.37	5.25 5.12
Sterling Pound	6.31	6.31	6.31 6.11
Deutsche Mark	3.56	3.50	3.43 3.43
Swiss Franc	1.56	1.50	1.50 1.50
French Franc	3.50	4.56	4.50 4.50
Japanese Yen	0.18	0.18	0.25 0.25
European Currency Unit	5.18	5.12	5.06 5.00
Interbank bid rates for current currency U.S. Dollar 1:100 or equivalent.			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: 2/1/1996			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100	
Sterling Pound	1.8927	1.8952	
Deutsche Mark	0.4925	0.4950	
Swiss Franc	0.6138	0.6161	
French Franc	0.1441	0.1448	
Japanese Yen	0.6637	0.6671	
Dutch Guilder	0.4399	0.4421	
Swedish Krona	*****	*****	
Italian Lira	0.0445	0.0447	
Belgian Franc	*****	*****	
* Per 100			
Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8620	1.8710	
Lebanese Lira	0.043725	0.044680	
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670	
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945	
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200	
Omani Riyal	1.8350	1.8410	
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933	
Greek Drachma	0.2355	0.3125	
Cypriot Pound	1.5225	1.5825	
* Per 100			

Spurs nail Manchester United 4-1

LONDON (R) — Tottenham Hotspur halted Manchester United's challenge to Newcastle for the English Premier League title when they nailed the former champions 4-1 on Monday.

United cut Newcastle's lead from 10 points to four last week but, with the chance of reducing the arrears to just one point as Newcastle were without a game till Tuesday, they ran into a Tottenham ambush at White Hart Lane.

Teddy Sheringham and Sol Campbell scored one each in the first half and Chris Armstrong struck twice after the interval to check the progress of United, who beat Newcastle 2-0 last Wednesday and Queen's Park Rangers 2-1 on Saturday.

Andy Cole equalised within a minute of Sheringham's opener for Spurs for their fourth goal in four games and had another spectacular effort ruled out when they were 4-1 down midway through the second half.

But Tottenham fully deserved their win, which put them back on track after two draws and a defeat by defending champions Blackburn in their three previous matches.

Newcastle entertain Tottenham's north London neighbours Arsenal in the first of two games they have in hand over United.

Newcastle lead the table with 45 points from 20 games, with United second on 41 points from 22.

Liverpool, two goals down against Nottingham Forest after 18 minutes, staged a remarkable recovery to win 4-2 and stay third, ahead of Tottenham on goal difference.

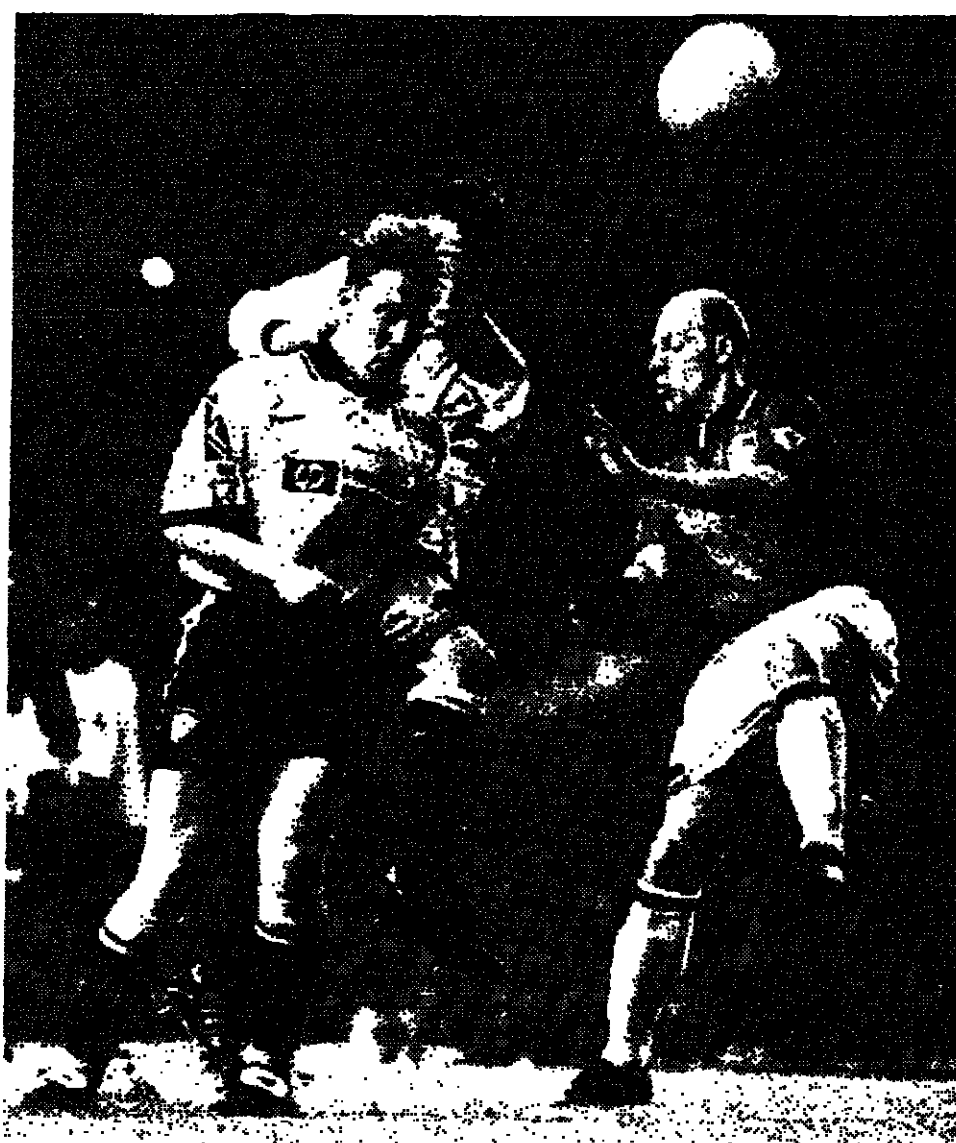
Both have 38 points — Liverpool from 21 games and Tottenham from 22.

English striker Sheringham gave Tottenham the lead in the 35th minute, nipping in to beat Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel from close range for his 17th goal of the season.

But Cole, who cost United £7 million (\$11 million) in a move from Newcastle last season, levelled within a minute, stabbing home Phil Neville's cross from the left.

Spurs, however, hit back immediately before the interval when Sheringham back-headed an excellent cross from Dean Austin into the path of Campbell, who shot through a forest of players beneath the diving Schmeichel.

Schmeichel, who had pulled a calf muscle in the warm-up, was replaced after the interval by Kevin Pilkington.



Manchester United's William Prunier (right) jumps for the ball with Tottenham Hotspur's Stuart Nethercott (left front) and Teddy Sheringham (left rear). The two sides were playing in a Premier League match on New Year's day (Reuters photo)

but the new keeper was powerless against two fine headers by Armstrong in the 48th and 66th minutes.

Cole was unlucky to have a goal disallowed for dangerous play after he had hooked the ball in brilliantly with a close-range overhead shot 12 minutes from the end.

But United can have no

own goal four minutes from time gave Liverpool a 4-2 victory.

Aston Villa moved up to fifth with a 2-0 win at Middlesbrough, who have faltered in recent weeks.

Alan Wright and Tommy Johnson struck the villa goals against a Middlesbrough side which badly missed England

don, claiming his first goals in the Premier League since his release from prison in late November after serving 44 days for butting an opponent when he played for Glasgow Rangers.

West Ham, with one goalkeeper injured and another suspended, had to give a debut to Neil Finn, 17, just three days earlier and the youngest player in Premier League history.

They lost 2-1 at Manchester City and manager Harry Redknapp complained that Premier League chiefs had refused to let him make an emergency loan signing.

BRITISH SOCCER

complaints about the outcome of the battle between two injury-stricken sides.

Liverpool looked in dire straits when England midfielder Steve Stone and Ian Woan scored in the 13th and 18th minutes to give visitors Nottingham Forest a 2-0 lead at Anfield.

But in-form Robbie Fowler netted twice before halftime to take his tally to seven goals in four games and a 62nd-minute strike by former Forest marksman Stan Collymore and a Colin Cooper

forward Nick Barmby and Norwegian striker Jan Aage Fjortoft.

Scottish international Duncan Ferguson scored twice in Everton's 3-2 win at Wimbledon.

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Agassi confirms Australian schedule

MELBOURNE (AP) — Andre Agassi, troubled by a chest muscle injury for the past three months, Monday confirmed he will play in the Colonial Classic and Australian Open tennis tournaments later this month.

Colin Stubs, tournament director of the Colonial Classic, said Agassi had finalized his travel plans and would play in the eight-man exhibition at Kooyong from Jan. 10-13 prior to defending his Australian Open men's singles title.

The injury forced Agassi out of the Davis Cup final against Russia in Moscow last month.

Agassi will line up with World No. 1 Pete Sampras and fellow American Jim Courier in the Colonial Classic.

The field also includes Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, Stefan Edberg of Sweden, Wayne Ferreira of South Africa, Michael Stich of Germany and Patrick Rafter of Australia.

Stubs said Agassi always had been confident of playing down under.

"He's had a pulled muscle, but it's never been a worry that he couldn't play," Stubs said. "I've just been advised that he has confirmed his flights."

The Colonial Classic is attractive to the leading players because they are guaranteed at least three matches on rebound accounts — the surface used in the Australian Open which starts on Jan. 15 at the National Tennis Center.

Jackie Stewart poised to return to Formula One

PARIS (AFP) — Britain's three-time world motor racing champion Jackie Stewart is poised to return to Formula One — as an owner.

The 57-year-old Scotsman and his son Paul are believed to have linked up with Ford to run a team in the 1997 season.

An official announcement from Ford is expected on Thursday morning in Detroit. Stewart is Britain's most successful ever Grand Prix driver, winning the championship in 1969, 1971 and 1973. He was runner-up in 1968 and 1972.

His son, under the name of Paul Stewart Racing, has become one of the top teams in Formula 3000 as well as Formula Three and Formula Vauxhall.

Stewart said recently that he would only go back into Formula One if the backing was available.

German youngster topples Bjorkman

ADELAIDE (Agencies) — Little known German teenager Nicolas Kiefer caused a big upset in the opening round of the Australian Men's Hardcourt Championships on Tuesday when he beat fourth-seeded Swede Jonas Bjorkman 6-2, 6-1.

Kiefer, who won through from qualifying, upset world No. 30 and Bjorkman to set up a second round meeting with big-serving Martin Damm of the Czech Republic.

Also joining Kiefer in the last 16 were Joern Renzenbrink and tour campaigner Carl-Uwe Steeb.

Colts upset Chargers 35-20; Packers to meet 49ers next week

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Colts clicked in the playoffs for the first time in 24 years, and they did it with the help of a running back who didn't gain a single yard in the regular season.

Zack Crockett, who took over the running chores after Marshall Faulk was injured, ran 33 and 66 yards for touchdowns and finished with 147 yards as Indianapolis beat defending AFC champion San Diego 25-20 on Sunday in American Football playoffs.

The rookie limped off the field late in the game, but not before leading the Colts to their first playoff win since Dec. 21, 1971, when Johnny Unitas quarterbacked the Baltimore Colts. The Colts were 0-5 in playoff games since then.

By the end of the game, the burly fullback was up and chatting with teammates and the Colts were on their way to play the Kansas City chiefs in a divisional playoff game at Arrowhead Stadium next Sunday.

Jim Harbaugh did his part, too, throwing for two touchdowns and running for another.

Crockett's 147 yards on 13 carries broke the club playoff record of 116 by Tom Matte in the 1969 super bowl loss to the New York Jets. His clinching 66-yard run in the fourth quarter was the longest rushing play by the Colts since Matte had a 58-yarder in that super bowl, and the longest scoring run since Ron Lee's 13-yarder against Oakland in 1977.

The Chargers were eliminated after winning their last five year regular-season games to recover from a 4-7 start to get back into the playoffs.

Crockett, a 241-pounder from Florida State, gave the Colts control of a see-saw game and stunned the crowd at Jack Murphy Stadium with his thrilling 66-yard touchdown run with 11:28 remaining. Chargers end Leslie O'Neal overran the delay play and Crockett chugged up the middle of the field, picking up a block from fellow running back Lamont Warren at the 10 to give the Colts a 28-20 lead.

On his first touchdown run, Crockett made a shambles of a defence noted for its play against the run, going untouched for 33 yards and a 14-10 lead with 1:47 left in the second quarter.

Harbaugh threw a perfect 42-yard scoring pass to the sliding Sean Dawkins with 41 seconds left in the third quarter, the fifth and final lead change that put the Colts up 21-17.

John Carney kicked a 30-yard field goal for the Chargers, and Crockett's big run came on the first play of the ensuing Colts series.

Harbaugh scored on a 3-yard run with 6:55 left. Faulk and Warren started the game, but Faulk aggravated his bruised left knee on the first series and did not return. He was in for only two plays, including a 16-yard carry to open the game.

Harbaugh was 16-of-27 for 175 yards, with one interception. Stan Humphries, who started 0-for-6, was 23-of-47 for 292 yards and two touchdowns.

Indianapolis led 14-10 at halftime, a score that held up after Humphries suffered his second interception of the half to ruin a perfect two-minute drill. After moving the Chargers from their 10 to a first-and-10 from the Indy 17, Humphries watched his pass bounce off Tony Martin's helmet in the end zone and into cornerback Ray McElroy's hands with 17 seconds left.

After being frustrated by San Diego's defence on their first three drives, the Colts broke through a Chargers goal-line stand to go ahead 7-3 three plays into the second quarter. On third-and-goal from the 2, Harbaugh was chased to the right but found rookie tight end Ken Dilger alone in the back right corner of the end zone.

Before the TD, linebacker Dwayne Gordon stuffed Lamont Warren for a one-yard loss and Seau made a leaping pass deflection. The drive was set up by Ray Buchanan's 46-yard punt return to the San Diego 27.

The Chargers converted five straight third downs on their next drive, including a

6-yard pass from Humphries to tight end Aligned Pupun 5:48 before halftime.

Crockett's 33-yarder came on the next drive.

Humphries clicked again in the third quarter to give San Diego its last lead, 17-14 on an 11-yard pass to Shawn Jefferson, who was wide open because defensive back David Tate turned his back. Humphries completed all five passes on that drive for 75 yards.

Packers storm past Falcons

At Green Bay, Wisconsin, Brett Favre threw three touchdown passes Sunday to beat the team who traded him away, leading Green Bay's 37-20 rout of Atlanta and sending the Packers to the second round of the American National Football league playoffs.

NFL playoff glance

All Times GMT Wild-card round Saturday, Dec. 30

Buffalo 37, Miami 22
Philadelphia 48, Detroit 37
Sunday, Dec. 31
Green Bay 37, Atlanta 20
Indianapolis 35, San Diego 20

Divisional Playoffs Saturday, Jan. 6
Saturday, Jan. 6
Buffalo at Pittsburgh, 1730
Green Bay at San Francisco, 2100

Sunday, Jan. 7
Philadelphia at Dallas, 1730
Indianapolis at Kansas City, 2100

Conference Championships Sunday, Jan. 14
Pairings TBD, 1730 and 2100

Super Bowl At Tempe, Arizona

Sunday, Jan. 28
AFC champion vs NFC champion, 2330

Sunday, Feb. 4
Pro Bowl At Honolulu, Hawaii
AFC all-stars vs NFC all-stars

Bulls go 13-1 for best month ever

CHICAGO (AP) — In November, the Chicago Bulls went 11-2 and established themselves as favourites for the American NBA championship. Scottie Pippen was magnificent. Dennis Rodman demonstrated that he could fit in. And Michael Jordan showed that he was still, well, Michael Jordan.

As it turns out, November was nothing compared to December — the best month in team history.

"We didn't approach it as, 'let's be 13-1 in December,'" Jordan said. "We approached it as, 'let's get this game ... let's get this game ... let's get this game.' The next thing you know, we were 13-1."

Said coach Phil Jackson: "Somewhere in the middle of the month, someone told me we could go undefeated. I laughed. But we almost did it."

Thanks to their December of domination, the Bulls take a 25-3 record into 1996. They are 15-0 at the United Centre. Yet despite their success, they insist they have room for improvement.

An unbeaten January, perhaps? "We're happy with our progress, but I don't think we're totally in love with how we've played in relation to how we're going to have to play in the playoffs," Jordan said. "I don't think we've played our best basketball yet. But I think we're going to be fine."

To the rest of the league, the Bulls already are too fine.

"They're great," said Atlanta coach Lemmy Wilkens, whose team came closer than any other to winning in Chicago before losing 95-93 Saturday. "Michael is playing great. Scottie is playing great. They are great leaders and make everybody else that much better."

The Bulls' only December loss was at Indiana last week. They rallied from a 24-point deficit to make it close but lost 103-97, snapping a 13-game winning streak. Three nights later, they gained revenge with a 120-93 victory over the defending Central Division champions.

"It's not just Michael and Scottie, but Ron Harper, Luc Longley, the whole team," Pacers coach Larry Brown said. "They all played great."

It's doubtful any other scorer can catch Jordan, who takes a 30-point average into the new year. San Antonio's David Robinson is next, 3 1/2 points back. It would be a record eighth scoring title for Jordan, who obviously is back in form; he looked rusty at times late last season after coming out of retirement.

"Everyone's measuring my game by comparing it to the way I played two or three years ago," Jordan said. "I'm in a different role now. Scottie Pippen has matured and my role has diminished a bit. But I'm still very happy with my role."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
476 ♠8532 ♠A986 ♠K9
The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♣ Pass
What action do you take?
Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
4A954 ♠852 ♠A1086 ♠A5
The bidding has proceeded:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♠ 1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass
What action do you take?

The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
2NT Pass 3♣ Pass
What do you bid now?
Q. 5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
4A4 ♠KQJ107 ♠A8762 4A
The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 2♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
4A753 ♠8 ♠K742 4A4
The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
What action do you take?

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Man accused of killing Michael Jordan's father to go on trial

CHICAGO (AP) — After two and a half years of waiting, the man accused of killing the father of basketball star Michael Jordan will get his day in court.

Daniel Andre Green, jailed on charges of first degree murder in connection with the July 1993 slaying of James Jordan, is scheduled to go on trial Wednesday in the state of North Carolina.

The 21-year-old, who has converted to the Muslim faith and has changed his name to Lord D. Al Saddiq Amin Salaam Allah, has told reporters he is optimistic about his chances of being acquitted in the shooting.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, say they are upbeat on getting a conviction.

Robeson County prosecutor Johnson Britt, who predicts the trial will last about four weeks, said he will seek the death penalty against Green.

Britt will be counting in part on testimony from co-defendant Larry Martin Demery, 20, who pleaded guilty to the murder in April. In the hopes of being spared the

death penalty, Demery has agreed to testify against his ex-best friend.

Demery has said previously that Green shot the elder Jordan during a robbery in North Carolina, after which the two dumped the man's body in a swamp just across the border in South Carolina.

Prosecutors also plan to introduce evidence showing that Green buried in his grandmother's yard a National Basketball Association championship ring that Michael Jordan, who plays for the Chicago Bulls, had given to his father.

Green has acknowledged he was in possession of Jordan's car and jewelry, but denies killing him. Neither Green nor his attorneys could be reached for comment.

The case has been marked by delays that authorities blame on a former prosecutor accused of withholding documents from the defence, and Britt was elected in 1994 on a platform of speeding up lagging prosecutions.

FIFA ready to move the goalposts

BONN (R) — World soccer's governing body, FIFA, is ready to enlarge the size of goals in an effort to make the game more attractive, General-Secretary Sepp Blatter said on Tuesday.

"The guardians of the rules are in agreement to lengthen the goals by the diameter of two balls, around 30 centimetres, and to increase the height by the diameter of one ball," Blatter told the German magazine Stern in an interview.

Blatter said FIFA's international board was considering the plan. It would reach a formal decision in March, which would be followed by a test period.

But Blatter vowed the changes would not be introduced for the 1998 World Cup in France. "We will play the 1998 World Cup with the current rules," he said in the interview, released ahead of publication on Thursday.

But the future of basketball-style time-outs, an innovation already being tested, looks uncertain.

"Footballers are so conservative," Blatter said. "So the mood in favour of time-outs is currently under 50 per cent. The matter is not quite finished with but the trend is negative."

Atlanta confident at start of Olympic year

ATLANTA (R) — With their Olympic year finally arrived, Atlanta's 1996 Games organisers say they are confident they can present what they are calling "the largest peacetime event in history."

The dropping of an electric "peach" at a midnight celebration in Atlanta not only signalled the start of the 100th anniversary of the modern Olympics on July 19.

And while the city's airport, roads, parks and sports facilities are undergoing massive overhauls, the head of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games is unstinting in his boasts that Atlanta will present "the best Olympic Games ever."

William Payne, president, founder and chief visionary of the Atlanta Olympic Group, says the city will be ready.

"We Americans, in terms of business and management and logistical and technological support — we're as good, or better, as anybody in the world at it," Payne said.

"And as a consequence, as an event these games are going to be fantastic. I have absolutely no doubt about that, have never harboured any doubts about that."

Olympic invitations were sent last summer to 197 countries. All but North Korea have accepted, and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a part-time Atlanta resident, has contacted the North Koreans asking them to reconsider their decision not to respond.

Even without North Korea, the Atlanta Olympics are expected to far surpass any previous in number of countries, athletes, sports contested, medals awarded and spectators.

Over the past six months, the committee had organised a series of 19 test events which played to mixed reviews from athletes, coaches and members of the news media. But Payne and other Olympic officials have said complaints will be dealt with and the 1996 Games will run smoothly.

"I think it's fair to say that there are still some unknowns out there which will probably

surface over the next six months that we're going to have to deal with in a professional and considered way," Payne said.

This month, Atlanta officials hope to put a lid — if not an end — on the five-year debate over whether the private Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) can stage the 1996 Summer Olympics without any taxpayer support.

Payne has insisted since the start of Atlanta's Olympic effort that the committee will be able to raise all the money it needs from corporate sponsorships, television rights fees, ticket and merchandise sales.

In October, Olympic officials said they had concluded, in their final "bulletproof" budget projection, that they will raise \$1.17 billion — a sum which would provide about \$13 million for unexpected contingencies.

But within a few days, Robbie Pound, a partner in Price Waterhouse and official Atlanta Olympic auditor, said the margin between projected revenue and expense was too close and ACOG had not revealed enough detail about how it plans to spend its money.

"This lack of detail raises our level of concern and raises the risk that ACOG could have a less than break-even result at the end of the games," he said.

Payne said he understood Pound's concern about ACOG spending. "It is inescapable and perhaps even impossible not to worry a little bit about keeping those items and issues under control," he said.

This month, Payne said, the committee will reveal new, more detailed expense figures. "We feel extremely confident we will meet or exceed our revenue objectives," Payne said.

The rest, he said, "is just doing business — and we're good at doing business. This organisation is not going to be paralysed — even remotely — over the financial issues which have occupied so much of our thought and so much of the media coverage."

Havelange promises 2006 World Cup to Africa

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Saying "Africa's time has come," FIFA president Joao Havelange promised the 2006 World Cup to the continent in an interview published in Rio daily Journal Do Brasil.

"The success of African soccer could result shortly in having a world champion as it has won competitions on other levels," Havelange said. "And to value the work that has been done, I will tell (South African) president Nelson Mandela on my trip that the 2006 World Cup will be on his continent."

"Africa has won the right to host its first world championship."

Havelange, who said South Africa is a favourite to host the tournament, is scheduled to travel to the country for the Jan. 13-Feb. 3 African Cup of Nations. The Africa Cup was rocked over the weekend by the withdrawal of defending champion Nigeria.

Havelange's statements were the latest in a series of gestures to Africa, which has been a strong supporter of the 79-year-old Brazilian in his re-election bids.

At the urging of Havelange, FIFA increased the World Cup field from 24 to 32 teams for 1998, with Africa receiving a quarter of the new berths, nearly doubling its slots to five despite only advancing one team to the quarterfinals in the history of the World Cup.

After FIFA pulled the under-20 world championship from Nigeria earlier this year over health concerns, Havelange promised Nigeria the 1997 tournament would be removed from Malaysia and given to Nigeria. He later backed away from that under pressure saying he had asked Malaysia to consider the relinquishing the tournament.

"It's the soccer of the future," Havelange said referring to Africa. "It began in amateur ranks and is triumphing with a lot of fight. Africa's main teams stand out in international competitions and increasingly more in the World Cups. Africa has players with a very high technical capacity, as in the case of George Weah of Liberia."

Weah, who plays with Italy's AC Milan, last week was awarded the 1995 Golden Ball award as Europe's best player.

African teams have won the last three and four of the six under-17 (under-16) world championships since FIFA began the competition in 1985. It also has had two teams reach the final at the under-20 world championship in its 18-year history.

Africa was granted an extra berth in the 1994 World Cup, increasing its number to three, after Cameroon's run to the quarterfinals in 1990, where it was beaten by England.

In 1994, Nigeria was eliminated in the second round by eventual finalist Italy, while Cameroon and Morocco did not advance past the first round.



Jens Weissflog of Germany raises his arms in joy after taking the third place in the Weissflog is leading the overall standings traditional New Year's ski jumping event after two jumping events so far (Reuters of the Four Hills competition in photo)

Germany storm to Hopman Cup win

PERTH (R) — Anke Huber won both her singles and doubles matches as Germany began their defence of the Hopman Cup mixed team tennis title by upsetting second seeds the Netherlands 2-1 on Tuesday.

Huber first beat Brenda Schultz-McCarthy 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8-6), then teamed with Martin Sinner to win the decisive doubles 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 over Schultz-McCarthy and Richard Krajicek.

Sinner lost his singles 7-5, 5-7, 7-6 (7-4) to Krajicek.

The German pair raced through the doubles after dropping the opening set.

Germany's victory was the second upset in the eight-nation, round robin tournament. The United States, seeded fifth, beat fourth-seeded South Africa on Monday.

Germany, the seventh seeds, had suffered a setback before the tournament when Huber's partner in last year's triumph, Boris Becker, made himself unavailable.

Huber, world-ranked 10th, also lost the first set of her

singles as the free-hitting Schultz-McCarthy surprised her with a series of forehand cross-court winners.

But the German levelled the match by breaking her big Dutch opponent's serve in the 10th game of the second set to win it 6-4.

Though Schultz-McCarthy, ranked 11th, served 20 aces — Huber had none — the German kept her cool and produced the more solid tennis at crucial moments.

Both women held serve through the deciding set until Huber eventually got through in the tie breaker, breaking her rival's serve on five points as she took it 8-6.

The key to Krajicek's victory over Sinner in a 140-minute battle was his ability to hit winners to the German's fragile backhand.

The 47th-ranked Sinner was also dogged by 12 double faults, five of them in the third set which enabled Krajicek to break back after dropping his own serve.

Meanwhile Goran Ivanisevic took just 72 minutes to beat Arnaud Boetsch as

favourites Croatia got the better of France in the Hopman Cup tennis tournament on Monday.

After Iva Majoli had cruised to a comfortable win over Catherine Tanvier in the Group A round robin match, Ivanisevic overcame some early hiccups to beat Boetsch and give top seeds Croatia a 2-0 win.

Ivanisevic won 7-5, 6-4. Majoli beat Tanvier 6-1, 6-2.

But Ivanisevic's victory came in uncharacteristic style with none of his usual big serves or aces.

"I should be trying to get in more first serves than I did," he observed.

Majoli, playing in the cup for the first time, did not have to exert herself against Tanvier.

The Frenchwoman, still recovering from surgery on her right knee which almost forced her into premature retirement, hobbled around the court gingerly throughout the 64 minutes of the match and never looked likely to upset Majoli.

The fifth-seeded United

States surprised the highly fancied south Africans 2-1 in the first upset of the tournament earlier on Monday.

Richey Reneburg bounced back after his American partner, teenager Chanda Rubin, had gone down to Amanda Coetzer in her singles, topping world number nine Wayne Ferreira 6-2, 6-2 to take the tie to 1-1.

In the deciding mixed doubles, Reneburg and Rubin kept their cool to overcome Ferreira and Coetzer 7-5, 6-3.

For the first time in eight years, the Hopman Cup has changed format, from knock-out in the early stages to round robin.

The electronic line-calling system that replaced line judges in the cup two years ago was out of service for most of the day.

Tournament referee Peter Bellenger decided to turn off the hi-tech TEL (tennis electronic lines) system when it failed during the first women's singles and the chair umpire took on the job of making the line calls.

Nigerian players lobby for Nations Cup slot

LAGOS (AFP) — Nigeria's footballers have petitioned the country's leader General Sani Abacha in a bid to have him reverse a decision to withdraw from the African National Cup, government officials said.

Nigeria, defending champions in the competition which starts on Jan. 13, announced they were pulling out on Saturday, claiming the South African hosts had failed to give guarantees of security for its players and officials.

The move came in the wake of South African-led sanctions against Nigeria, following the Nov. 10 execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his companions in the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People.

But a last-ditch attempt to keep their team in the Cup has now been launched by Nigeria's professional and amateur footballers.

Those backing the petition have been further encouraged by Sunday's announcement by the ruling African

Football Confederation (CAF) in Cairo that it had not received any official notification of a withdrawal.

The move had originally been announced by Sports Minister Chief Jim Nwobodo, who said there was a palpable feeling of hostility against Nigeria and Nigerians which gave the West African nation no other choice.

On Sunday, sources close to the sports ministry said that decision could also be reversed if senior CAF or FIFA officials intervened in the dispute.

Officials were, meanwhile, concerned about any action which CAF or FIFA might take against Nigeria if the withdrawal went ahead as announced.

The prospect of losing Nigeria left South African football officials stunned, and other teams disappointed.

Solomon Morewa, president of the South African Football Association (SAFA), described the move on Sunday as "unbelievable"

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